MEMOIR OF JAMES MARSDEN

Rev. Geo. Scott.

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MEMORIALS

OF

JAMES MARSDEN,

OF OLDHAM AND DEWSBURY,

WHO FOR FIFTY-SEVEN YEARS SERVED HIS GENERATION AS A MISSIONARY COLLECTOR, SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER, PRAYER LEADER, CLASS LEADER, LOCAL PREACHER, AND VISITOR OF THE SICK AND DYING.

BY

GEORGE SCOTT,

WESLEYAN METHODIST MINISTER.

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CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE.

JAMES MARSDEN was the son of Simeon and Sarah Marsden, of Oldham.

His maternal grandfather, James Taylor, was a member of the church choir, in a manufacturing town of Lancashire, and was aroused from his spiritual slumbers, one Sunday morning, under a sermon in his own church, preached by his own minister. So great was his alarm, at the discovery of his sin and peril, that he could neither eat nor sleep.

The next morning he went to his spiritual instructor, told him his distress, and asked his advice. "What James!" said the surprised clergyman, "Has my sermon been the cause of this?" "Indeed it has sir," said James. "Well," replied the clergyman, "the sermon is one of John Wesley's, and if his

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sermons disturb my congregation in this way; I will preach no more of them. As to giving you advice James, I cannot, but there is an old Methodist lives yonder (giving his address), he will tell you what to do, better than I can."

Mr. Taylor at once went to the Methodist, and told his case. The old man listened, rejoiced, told him God's way of saving men by faith in Jesus, prayed with him, invited him to the meetings, and lent him a magazine.

After some weeks' seeking, he found the peace of God, joined the Methodist Society, and at length died in the Lord.

His son and daughter, Thomas and Sarah Taylor, had joined the Society some time before the conversion of their father, and rejoiced over the change as an answer to their prayers.

Sarah Taylor was converted to God in her sixteenth year, under a sermon preached by the Rev. Richard Rodda; and subsequently became the wife of Simeon Marsden, and the mother of the subject of this memoir.

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Simeon Marsden was by trade a hatter. At the time of his conversion, which took place in the 24th year of his age, in the year 1796, he was a companion of fools who make a mock at sin.

One Sunday afternoon, as he was returning home from a stroll with his companions, he observed a young woman attired in the neat costume of "women professing godliness" in those times. Her countenance was more striking than her dress. Her son says she was very beautiful. Simeon saw her go to the Methodist chapel, and resolved that he would go too. Just at that time he received an invitation from one of his old companions in sin, who had been led to think upon his ways, and to turn his feet to the divine testimonies; and he went with his friend to the chapel.

One Sunday evening, the preacher announced that a Society Meeting would be held at the close of the service, and Simeon resolved to stay. But an unexpected difficulty presented itself. All the congregation

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left the chapel, the members being re-admitted by shewing their Society tickets, and non-members by a note from the minister. Simeon had no note, and moreover, was known to the steward who kept the door as an irreligious man. When he presented himself for admittance, the steward said to him, "I know thee, and cannot let thee pass." The repulse enraged him; and he resolved that when the last person had entered, he would seize the faithful officer and roll him in the snow. But the steward was too quick for him. He shut the door and bolted it, leaving the disappointed man to his reflection.

Quick as lightning the thought struck him, "So it will be in the last day! The righteous will be admitted into heaven and thou wilt be shut out."

He walked about in great mental agitation, when he was noticed by a member, who was going into the chapel, and who, learning from him the facts of the case, sought to induce the Steward to admit

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him; but he was again refused, and Simeon went home to pray.

The next evening he went to the chapel, thinking there might be a meeting of some kind. There was a class meeting. He sought admission, but being known, and yet not known, he was again refused. This deepened his distress. He then sought out one whom he knew to be a member of the Society, and told his case. From this time he became regular in his attendance at the meetings, sought the Lord in the deepest distress of soul, till in a few weeks he found peace in believing.

But a great trial awaited him. His father was addicted to intemperance, and was greatly exasperated at the change which had taken place in his son.

One night he came home drunk, and hearing Simeon praying, swore he would not have a praying Methodist in his house, and seizing a poker went up stairs, and would probably have done his son serious injury, but for the prompt interposition of his mother and his own retreat.

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The father then threw his son's box and clothes into the street, and Simeon having placed them in safety, sought and found an asylum at the house of an old Methodist couple; till having saved money enough to furnish a house, and having won the consent of Sarah Taylor, he was married.

Having experienced a thorough change of heart, he became as valiant in religion, as formerly he had been in worldliness and sin. He became a teacher in the Sunday school, then in its infancy in Oldham as elsewhere.

Not satisfied with this, he set himself to establish prayer meetings in different localities. In a sketch read at his funeral sermon in Oldham, the writer says, "He was accustomed to procure a place, hold a few meetings, and then unite in a class those who were determined to flee from the wrath to come; and after they had met for two or three successive weeks, leave them in charge of a leader, appointed by the minister. He would then find fresh fields, and leave them with like results, to enter upon another sphere."

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At a certain place, he and his companions met with violence from a band of colliers, who beat them with ropes, and then, to keep up the confusion turned on one another. On one of these occasions, a powerful young man, who was standing by, and who was in sympathy with the prayer leaders, roused by the rude treatment to which they were subjected, went up to the ring-leader, and advised him to desist; telling him if he did not voluntarily, and at once, he should compel him. This enraged him; upon which the young athlete seized him, took him up in his arms like a child, carried him to a brook in an adjoining field and ducked him. Asking him if he would behave himself, and not getting a satisfactory answer, he gave him another plunge. His temperature being cooled, he promised to behave better in the future, became a convert, and the meetings were disturbed by him no more.

In the year 1797, Simeon Marsden was appointed a class leader, by the Rev. Thomas Taylor, then superintendent of the circuit,

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and President of the Conference. He sustained this office with acceptance and fidelity for about fifty years, when he was compelled by age and infirmity to retire from active service. For many years, he had two, and sometimes three classes, under his care; when, having removed to a small farm, a little way out of town, and being afflicted with rheumatism, he was compelled to give up two of them; he continued to meet the one in town, although it took him a full hour to walk from his home, to the place of meeting.

He thrice saw the Church wasted by agitators, but such was his fidelity and influence, that out of his three classes, he lost but four of his members.

In the year 1829, he was bereaved of the wife of his youth. Just before her departure, he went into her room with his hat on. She said, "Simeon take off your hat; don't you see what company you are in? The room is full of angels, and while you have been away they have been singing for me delightfully."

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He was just about to reply, when she said, "Simeon, be silent, they are just beginning again;" and with her voice, she joined "the heavenly lays." Simeon was overpowered with a sense of the presence of unseen beings. When she ceased singing, she said, "Simeon, they are going, and I am going with them. Farewell! Farewell!" and she was gone.

She lived to see seven sons, members of the Methodist Society, and several of them leaders and local preachers. She died aged 56.

Simeon Marsden survived his wife about twenty-four years. His son James visited him on his death-bed, and found him reading the Bible. "So you are reading the Bible," said his son. "Yes," replied the dying veteran, "this is the only Book that has any attraction for me now. I used to be as fond as any one of reading other books." Then, taking up the Bible, tears trickling down his cheeks, he said, "but this Book is full of comfort. I have been reading about

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the New Jerusalem, the heavenly city, and the inhabitants who live there. I thought I saw thy mother there, and Sarah, and Elizabeth, and many others whom I well knew." Then, taking his son by the hand, he said, "And I shall soon be with them, James; my race is nearly run."

"There is my house and portion fair;
My treasure and my heart are there,
And my abiding home:
For me my elder brethren stay,
And angels beckom me away,
And Jesus bids me come."

When his son was about to leave, he said, "James, it is likely I may never see thee again in this world, but we shall meet again in glory, and I hope all our family will meet there too. He died January 8th, 1858, aged 81.

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CHAPTER II.

EARLY LIFE.

JAMES MARSDEN was born October 5th, 1797. He was early sent to the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday school, and to a day school, where he received instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and was afterwards brought up to the trade of a hatter with his father.

When he was about seven years of age, he had a narrow escape of drowning. He was reaching over the edge of a large pond, in his father's garden, for some flowers and fell in. His father, who was at work a little distance off, hearing the splash, ran, and plunging into the water, found his boy lying at the bottom, with the flowers in his hand. Life seemed extinct, but by the persevering use of restoratives, consciousness returned.

Speaking of the moral and religious nurture of his home, he writes, "My mother

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often took us into her chamber to pray with us, to instruct us in the knowledge of God and to lead us to the Saviour."

Again, "when any of us were disobedient, she took us to her room, and when she had pointed out to us the evil of our conduct and brought us to penitence, she would pray with us.

"One morning in the winter season, when all was quite dark, I heard whispering, and was very much afraid. The whispering continuing for a long time, I took courage and got up, determined to find out where it was. I went and listened at the door of my parents' room, but it was not there. I went down stairs and found I was getting nearer to it. I then gently opened the door of a large kitchen, and there I saw my mother, upon her knees, with the Bible open before her, praying for her children."

The following shows the co-operation of the Divine Spirit with this parental example, instruction, and intercession, in conjunction with a good book and Church ordinances :—

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"When about eight years old, I was with my parents at a lovefeast in Oldham Chapel. A young person spoke about disobedience to her parents. I knew that I was guilty of the same sin, and the thought made me weep bitterly. Not long after this, I recollect the Lord strove with me again, while I sat hearing Mr. George Marsden preach his farewell sermon in Oldham Chapel. I was afraid I should cry aloud, so I took my hat, got out as soon as I could, and went home and wept.

"When I was between nine and ten years of age, one Sabbath afternoon, my parents were gone to the chapel, and I was left at home to take care of one of the children. I began to read 'John Nelson's Journal,' and was so affected, that I could not go on, and began to pray in a manner I never did before; but I could scarcely utter a word, my heart was so full of grief.

"I also received good impressions in the Sunday school, when hearing the leaders and other pious persons, praying and exhorting

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the scholars to turn to God in our young years; particularly three of the leaders, viz.: John Marsland, Thomas Dawson, and James Fletcher. I scarcely ever heard them speak, but my heart was affected."

These records show that throughout a considerable portion of these early years, James Marsden, like thousands of young people of a similar age, could say:—

"By secret influence from above,
Me Thou dost every moment prove,
And labour to convert;
Ready to save, I feel Thee nigh,
And still I hear Thy Spirit cry,
'My son, give me thy heart.'"

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CHAPTER III.

STRAYING.

But while the Holy Spirit was seeking, through the religious appliances of a Christian home and those of the church to which he was related, to keep him from going astray, another Spirit, "the Spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience," was striving, through evil companionship, to restrain him from youthful consecration; and to this malign agency he yielded, till checked by a fearful scald; his recovery from which, was followed, to use his own words, "by great strides in sin and folly."

The scald occurred on this wise. "When I was about fourteen, I was leaping over some planks, and my right leg slipped into the hatter's kettle, up to the knee. The skin came off with my stocking. When the fire was out, plasters were put on; and

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when taken off, the flesh came off with them.

"For many days and nights, my pain was so great I scarcely slept at all, but I wept night and day. My parents were greatly exercised, both in body and in mind. My father would come to me in the night and say, 'James, what can I do for thee.' 'Pray for me, father,' said I, that my leg may be easy. This he would do, and the moment he began to pray, my pain began to abate; and I have often got to sleep before it was so violent again. The doctor wished me to go to the infirmary and submit to amputation, but I always said, I would rather lose my life than my leg.

"I remember one day my mother came to me, and said, 'James would thou rather die than live?' I said 'I would rather die and go to heaven.' She wept over me and said, 'I could not like to part with thee;' and she knelt down and prayed earnestly that the Lord would spare me. During this affliction, I was often very happy while my

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parents and others prayed with me, and I made up my mind to be a good lad.

"As my pain diminished, and my strength increased, I began to read different sorts of books; some of which were pleasing, and profitable.

"I was about five months confined to my bed or couch before I could bear my leg down, and then for four months I went about on crutches.

"When I was completely restored I began to be very wild, and went into sin and folly with my old companions; but I knew I was doing wrong, and when I was alone I was very miserable.

"I had just turned fifteen, when I began to go to public houses, at which my parents were much distressed, and stopped it for awhile by withholding my money; but as I grew older, I went with my companions at all opportunities, particularly on the Sunday evening after the service at the chapel.

"When about seventeen, we began to keep company with young women about our own

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age, and this weaned me entirely from all that was good. I loved the creature more than the Creator, and was so completely taken up with worldly pleasure, that for several years I did not so much as kneel down alone to say the Lord's prayer.

"Many times did my parents remonstrate with me, but I replied to them with jokes, for which I was afterwards very sorry; but I went on serving the devil with greediness, frequenting public houses, and attending wakes and fairs, till I had finished my nineteenth year."

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CHAPTER IV.

RETURNING.

One of the ministers in Oldham at this time was the Rev. W. E. Millar.* Before his conversion, Mr. Millar was a skilful performer on the violin, and went to India, where by his musical feats he pushed his way into the court of Tippoo Saib.

He returned to England and became the attraction of worldly and fashionable circles. One day he was passing Norfolk Street Chapel, Sheffield, during the time of a great revival. Attracted by the singing, he went in, fell under the mighty influence of the Holy Spirit, and was converted.

Finding his instrument, for which he would not take a thousand pounds, likely to prove a snare to him, he resolved never

* Life by Dr. Dixon.

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to touch it again. He kept his resolution, became a Methodist preacher, and was now one of the regular staff on the Oldham Circuit.

James Marsden was brought into personal contact with this devoted and successful minister in the following circumstances. He was again at home a cripple, having injured his leg by jumping over tombstones in the church yard, on a Sabbath day.

Mr. Millar called to pay his parents a pastoral visit. "When he came into the house," says Mr. Marsden, "I was reading a book, containing the life of a soldier and of Voltaire. The moment I saw him, all the sins of my past life came with power to my mind. I felt terrified, as if I was going to be tried for my life. Most of our family were out, and he came to me and said, 'Well, my lad, dost thou feel happy in the love of God?' I could not speak, but wept exceedingly. He shook hands with my mother and made enquiries about

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me, and then turned and gave me good advice.

"My mother then called in my father and the rest of the family, and he prayed with us in a very affecting manner. In his prayer he mentioned the lad that was afflicted, which affected me much. When he had done he asked me what I was reading, and would have looked at the book, but I hid it behind me, and told him it was the life of a soldier; upon which, he shook hands with the family and took his leave. When I got better I went with my old companions as usual."

His permanent awakening was brought about by somewhat singular means. It was on the evening of Sunday, November 24th, 1816. He had been to chapel, and after the service went strolling with his companions. An altercation took place between them; when one of them uttered a fearful imprecation, which lodged like a red hot shot in his soul. "In Hell!" said I, "well, if I must go to hell, I think I shall be going

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towards home; and I went home, full of agitation and terror."

"When I entered the house, I took up a volume of the "Arminian Magazine," and began to read an account of 'The Life and Death of Mr. George Ball, of Plymouth Dock.' All I read condemned me. My heart was filled with sorrow, and my eyes with tears. I rose up and laid down the book. My mother, seeing my distress, said 'James, what is the matter with thee?' I gave her no answer, but went up stairs, and with great fear and trembling, knelt down to pray; which, excepting at family worship, I had not done for five or six years.

"The next morning, when family prayer was over, my mother came to me and said, 'James, I have been to James Lomas, and asked him to call for thee on Thursday night, to go with him to their class meeting.'

"In a very sharp manner I said, 'If he does I shall not go.' I had no sooner got

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out of the house than my heart began to palpitate, and I was very much afraid she would give him back word not to call for me.

"All that day I was much distressed on account of my misspent life. In the evening there was to be a prayer meeting at the chapel, and I resolved to go; but when the time came, I felt such an inward struggle as I cannot describe. I ran as fast as I could to the chapel, got where I could hear without being seen, and then ran home again; well pleased that I had got through so well without being observed.

"The two following days I was more careful over my words, and endeavoured to keep from sin as well as I could, and in the evening went to chapel and heard a sermon; a thing I had not done on the week night, excepting on particular occasions, for many years.

"I went by the back roads for fear of being seen, for I thought every body was looking at me, which made me tremble exceedingly.

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"On the Thursday evening I finished my work a little before eight o'clock, and began to read in the magazine, waiting for the friend before-named. I was much afraid he would not come; but in a little while he came, and I was very glad."

"Well, Jemmy," said he, in a very cheerful manner, "wilt thou go with me to the class to-night?"

I was so full of feeling that I could not answer him. My father, being present, said, "O yes, our James will go with you, I doubt not." I said, "Well, I may perhaps go to-night, but I do not know that I shall ever go again."

"We set out, and I wept all the way. They sung and prayed and spoke of the goodness of God to them. They prayed for the lad that was come up that evening. It affected me much to think that they should take any notice of such a sinner as me. When it was over they shook hands with me, and asked me to come again; and after going a few times I was allowed to have

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my name inserted on the class-paper as on trial."

Those were hard times for working people. The battle of Waterloo had just brought to an end the wars with the first Napoleon. Taxes were high, work was scarce, and provisions of all sorts dear. Flour was seven and sixpence the twelve pounds. The times were called "Barley times," because barley meal was used as a substitute for wheaten flour.

This throws light on what follows. "Our family consisted of my parents and eight children. We were out of work for nearly three months, and were often without bread, or had a scanty supply, and that of the coarsest kind. All our poultry were killed for food, except a young fowl of mine.

"When I had been six weeks on the class paper my fowl laid six eggs, which I sold for sixpence. I took this to the class meeting, as my first offering to the Lord. When I laid down my sixpence one of the members, who knew our circumstances, said,

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'James, lad, thou must not pay anything.' I felt very much grieved, but the leader, a wiser man, said, 'Let the lad pay his sixpence, it will do him good.' After I had paid it I felt more pleased than I could express.

"The leader then said, 'Now we must give the lad something to take home with him,' and he put down a shilling. Another did the same, and others sixpence, so that my sixpence was multiplied ten fold.

"I then got provisions of various kinds, and went home rejoicing. My parents wept for joy. My good mother got some tea that night, a luxury she had not been able to get for some time, and at family prayer we all rejoiced together."

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CHAPTER V.

CONFLICT.

At the birth of John, the forerunner of Jesus, his father was filled with the Holy Ghost, and sung "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath—raised up a horn of salvation for us,—that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life."

But James Marsden was not yet "out of the hands of his enemies." He had been brought to see his peril as a sinner, he had decided to lead a new life, but he had yet to learn, by long and painful experience, the "devices," "depths," "wiles," and "snares" of his spiritual adversaries, and his own inability to cope with them, apart

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from faith in Christ, and that "joy of the Lord" which constitutes "our strength."

His first struggle was with his companions. Meeting them one day, they said to him, "So we hear you have turned Methodist." "I said, yes, but I shall not leave you entirely." I accordingly went with them one Sabbath evening again. I told the young woman who was so dear to me, that "I was determined to be a Methodist;" and I did all in my power to persuade her to be the same, but to no purpose. I then told her that she must not expect so much of my company as I had given her. I promised to meet her again the next Sunday evening, but I was so affected under the sermon that I did not go. The following Sunday evening I saw her, but she spoke to me in a very angry manner, upon which I left her and went to a prayer meeting a little out of town.

"It was a great struggle to give them up, but I saw that it was my duty to do so, and at once, or they would prove a

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snare to my soul, and I went all the bye ways I could find, for fear of seeing them.

"In a few weeks I met them as I was going to the chapel. They laid hold of me and told me they would not allow me to go the chapel, and insisted upon my going with them. This was a great trial, but I lifted up my heart to God for help, and then told them, very boldly, that my mind was made up to lead a new life, and if they wanted my company they must go with me, for I should not go any longer with them; and looking them in the face, I said, 'Now, which of you will go with me?' but one by one they left me, and I feared them no more.

Special band meetings were occasionally held in those days on the Wednesday evenings, at one of which he says, "I ventured, for the first time, to tell the brethren the state of my mind. The moment I began to speak, I felt the Lord to work in me in a very powerful manner, and, when they began to pray for 'that lad that was weary

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of sin, and just turning his back upon the world,' I could not help crying aloud for mercy.

"Whilst they prayed, Mr. Millar urged me to give up all for Christ, and to trust in Him as my Saviour. I strove to do so, but the enemy suggested, 'Can you give up your parents who are so good to you?' I said, 'Yes, for Christ.' 'Can you give up your brothers and companions whom you have loved so well!' I answered, 'Yes, for Christ.' I began to see light and my heart began to rejoice, when suddenly it was suggested,—'Can you give up that young woman, who is so dear to you?' I said, '*No.*' In a moment I began to tremble exceedingly. I could not pray, nor so much as lift up my eyes to heaven, and my heart began to be as hard as ever.

"The brethren pressed me to wrestle on, but I could not, nor could I for shame tell them the hindrance. Mr. Millar then concluded the meeting, and the people went home, very sorrowful, that after they had

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stayed with me till near twelve o'clock, I was not set at liberty.

"Two of the brethren went home with me and encouraged me to persevere. When I got home my parents were waiting for me, but they went to rest, and I began to pray in the best manner I was able, but I could not fully give up all.

"The next morning my father was from home. When we had got our breakfast, we were going off to our work without family prayer; but I felt such a need of it, that I called my mother, and said to her, 'Mother, let us kneel down and see if some of us cannot pray while my father is from home. She gladly consented, and called all the family together. My mother prayed first, and then I ventured for the first time to take up my cross in the family, and my younger brother dismissed us. Most of us were bathed in tears, particularly my mother, who was so much affected that tears were trickling down her cheeks most of the day.

"We went to our work much refreshed,

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but the idol was in my heart. Day by day I strove to give her up, but could not for nearly four months, though I never spoke to her, nor even saw her oftener than I could help; for I thought if it had not been for her I should have been without my burden, which was very heavy, and I became quite weary of the sight of her.

"One Wednesday evening, Mr. Millar preached a sermon on idolatry. He mentioned many idols that people worship, and amongst them mine. He shewed the vanity of this idolatry, and that *all* must be given up *entirely*, before we could be saved. I went home and prayed for power to give up my idol, and after some time was enabled to make the surrender; and I rejoiced in the victory which the Lord had given me."

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CHAPTER VI.

CONFLICT CONTINUED.

But the conflict was not yet over, and more than twelve months passed away before he entered into "the glorious liberty of the children of God;" during which time his soul was like a battle field, on which opposing forces were contending for the mastery.

On the one side were the Holy Spirit, his reason, conscience, and will; and on the other, Satan, and a pharisaic, despairing, and procrastinating unbelief.

Now he was elevated by hope, and now depressed by fear. Sometimes he was rejoicing in the victory of a temporary faith, and then suffering defeat through doubt.

One day, gleams of sunshine played over the surface of his soul, and another, his sky was darkened by the blackest clouds,

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and neither sun nor stars for many days appeared.

During this period he rose early in the morning, and spent some time in reading and prayer. He attended the social and public means of grace with regularity, but he lacked a trusting faith in Jesus. Now and then he made use of the key of promise, and began to breathe the air, and to walk in the light of the gospel; when he was again seized by Giant Despair, and thrown back into the dungeon of Doubting Castle.

The morning after he had given up his idol, he says, "I began to pray that the Lord would pardon my sins, and shed abroad His love in my heart, but immediately, the enemy told me, *I had no need of pardon; I had done nothing wrong. Pardon was for the profane and vicious.* Being ignorant of Satan's devices, this puzzled me, and I began to accept it as the solution of my case; but I was still unhappy, because I knew I was not fit to die.

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"I then began to see that though I had not been so profane and profligate as some, I had sinned against light, and that this was worse than open vice, in the absence of the privileges I had enjoyed. I then came to the conclusion that *I was too great a sinner to be forgiven, that my day of grace was past, that though I might have been pardoned at one time, it was now too late; and I might as well give it up, for I never should be forgiven.*

"This temptation was the worst of all, but I made a firm resolution, that if I never found the Lord I would never give up seeking Him.

"I often felt encouraged when hearing the word preached, particularly under Mr. Millar. One Wednesday night, while he was describing the character of gospel mourners, I felt I was the character described, and at the prayer meeting after, I cried aloud for mercy. While Samuel Schofield, who died happy in the Lord at the latter end of 1818 was praying, weeping, and wrestling on my

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account, I felt a confidence that I should go to heaven, and went away with a sense of inward peace. But on my way home the enemy of my soul suggested that I was deceiving myself, and my burden was as heavy as before.

"In the course of his sermon one Sunday evening, Mr. Millar turned to me, and said, 'There is one in this congregation who has been seeking the Lord more than twelve months, but he wants to buy his pardon with tears and long repentance, which he cannot do.' After the sermon I went to a prayer meeting a little out of town, and had nearly a mile to go home by myself. I began to cry to the Lord on the road, and wept and prayed most of the way home.

"When I had taken a little food, I went into my closet, and poured out my soul before the Lord. I boldly said, 'Lord, I do believe,' and continued to repeat this till I went to rest; but in the morning the enemy said, it was all a delusion and I was deceiving myself. This was what I was

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afraid of doing, afraid of professing that the love of God was shed abroad in my heart before it really was so. Thus I went on, seeking rest but finding none."

The temptation subsequently took another form, which he thus describes. "In the morning when I rose to prayer, the enemy would say I must go to my work, and the Lord would pardon me at noon. At noon it was suggested He would pardon me in the evening at the meeting. Then He would pardon me when I was in private. In private, some of my brothers were in bed, and they would hear me. I had better go to bed and He would pardon me in the morning before any of them were about.

"In the morning, I must get forward with my work and I should have more time at noon. At noon the rest of my brothers were at work, and I was losing so much time; I had better go to mine, and He would pardon me in the evening before I went to rest. In the evening I was so tired I had better go to rest, and in the morning I should be able to pray more earnestly.

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"In this way my weeks were spent for a long time. Sometimes I had hope that the Lord would pardon me and sometimes I had none, for when I prayed either in public or in private, *I could not trust in Christ as my living, present Saviour. It must be at some future time.* Thus I went on for many months, in bondage through unbelief. O the power of unbelief! Merciful God deliver me from it entirely!"

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CHAPTER VII.

DELIVERANCE.

It is the glorious privilege of the believer in Jesus to know his sins forgiven. To impart this knowledge is the sole prerogative of God the Holy Ghost, and this He gives when sin is pardoned, not before. The operation is called "witnessing," "assuring," "sealing," "lifting upon us the light of God's countenance," "putting gladness into the heart," "shedding abroad the love of God in the heart, by the Holy Ghost given unto us."

The faith to which this is promised, can be exercised only by a heart broken with conviction of sin, sorrow for sin, fear of the consequences of sin, and animated by a full purpose to give up all for God.

This faith is not a mere intellectual assent to the truth of the claims of Christ,

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but such an assent as leads us to apply to Him, and to trust in Him for a definite blessing; that blessing being the pardon, the remission of sin. It is "faith in His blood," as an accomplished, accepted, and everlasting atonement for human sin.

God alone knows when this faith is exercised, and when it is exercised He forgives, and when He forgives, His Spirit

> "Assures our conscience of its part,
> In the Redeemer's blood;
> He bears his witness with our heart;
> And we are born of God."

This assurance is the divine response to the penitent's trust. James Marsden longed for this assurance, and could not rest without it; but he lacked the faith to which it is the echo. He wanted the witness first, but the divine order is faith first, then pardon, then the assurance of pardon. "After that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise;" "after," not before.

But this distressed soul was too much

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occupied with the contemplation of his sin and misery, and appears to have been expecting God to do what He has not promised to do, viz., to fill a faithless heart with peace, and love, and joy. How he passed from unbelief to faith, from bondage to freedom, from servility to sonship, from death to life; what follows shews.

On the evening of Wednesday, the fourth of June, 1818, the Rev. James Macdonald was the preacher.

After the public service a band meeting was held, but not being generally known, James Marsden found himself alone with the preacher.

"Mr. Macdonald asked me the state of my mind, but I could not answer him, for I scarcely knew how it was with me. He then asked me if I felt Christ precious to my soul, but I answered very faintly, 'No,' for my heart was very sorrowful. He then said, 'Well, do not be discouraged, you are in a good way; none ever went to hell in the state in which you are. If you were

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to die this evening, God would cut short His work in righteousness, and take you to heaven. Look to Jesus. You are not far from the kingdom of God. Look now, and expect Him to save you every moment.

"We then knelt down, and he prayed with me. Another who had come in also prayed, and it was a refreshing season to my soul.

"Before this meeting, I had thought for a long time that I never should be pardoned, though I was determined never to turn back; but when the meeting was over I began to be full of hope.

"On Wednesday, June 18th, Mr. Millar preached and held a band meeting. When several of the brethren and sisters had spoken, Mr. Millar called on an old leader named Roger Peel, a man of great faith and power, to pray, and whilst he prayed I was enabled to trust in Christ for salvation.

'Th' eternal Sun of righteousness,
Displayed his beams divine;
And caused the glories of His face,
Upon my heart to shine.'

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"I rose from my knees, went into the middle of the room, and shouted *Glory! Glory! God has just pardoned my sins. God has just set my soul at liberty.*

"There was great rejoicing. They had prayed with me so often, and so long, particularly Mr. Millar. A brother struck up the doxology, but pitched it too high. When told it was too high, he said 'they ought to pitch it high for me; they had struggled so long.'

"When I reached home it was nearly eleven o'clock, and my mother was waiting up for me. When I told her God had set my soul at liberty, O how she did rejoice! We got upon our knees, and she was full of joy, on account of another of her children being born for glory.

"The day following I was so happy, I could not follow my work for praising God and telling others what He had done for my soul.

"The next Sabbath a lovefeast was to be held in one of the villages, and Mr.

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Millar was appointed to conduct it. I went with a few others, and got into as retired a seat as I could find. After several had spoken, I felt prompted to speak, and to tell how happy I was. I went to the front of the Communion, and looking up to the minister, said, 'Mr. Millar must I speak?' He said, 'Yes, my lad, speak.' I then told them God had set my soul at liberty, and how happy I was. This very much strengthened my confidence, and I went on my way rejoicing."

Referring, at a subsequent date, to the day when "the love of God was shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given to him;" he writes, "My soul was then filled with peace and joy in believing. The happiness I then felt, more than recompensed me for the sorrow which for days and nights, through weeks and months, I had experienced."

"I thank thee uncreated Sun,
That thy bright beams on me have shined;
I thank thee who hast overthrown
My foes, and healed my wounded mind;
I thank thee, whose enlivening voice
Bids my freed heart in thee rejoice."

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"Uphold me in the doubtful race,
Nor suffer me again to stray;
Strengthen my feet with steady pace
Still to press forward in thy way;
My soul and flesh, O Lord of might,
Fill, satiate with thy heavenly light."

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CHAPTER VIII.

SERVICE.

CHRISTIAN zeal has always been in proportion to the clearness and fulness of Christian experience. The forms in which this zeal manifests itself vary in different persons, but a Christian without zeal is an anomaly, a contradiction.

The rapid and extensive spread of the great revival of the past century was traceable, under God, to the definite evangelical experiences of its leading agents, their coadjutors and successors. It was by this means that its machinery was created, and, apart from this, it cannot be efficiently maintained. Let this decline, and its power will diminish, like that of an engine, whose motive force is reduced. It is this which has raised up an army of Christian workers from among the rich and poor, the learned and the illiterate,

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of varying capacities and characters, unequalled in number and power since the days of the Apostles.

James Marsden's abilities did not qualify him for an elevated rank in this army, and his sphere of action was very limited, but he was faithful at the posts assigned him.

"Talk not of talents; what hast thou to do;
Thy duty be thy portion—five or two:
Talk not of talents; is thy duty done?
Thou hadst sufficient, were they ten or one.
Lord, what my talents are, I cannot tell,
Till thou shalt give me grace to use them well;
That grace impart, the bliss will then be mine,
But all the power, and all the glory thine."

J. MONTGOMERY.

The first thing was, to keep the fire burning, which, like the fire on the altar in the temple, was kindled by the divine hand, on the altar of his heart; but which, in both cases, depended for its maintenance upon the vigilance of man. For this, his record shows, he rose early in the morning for private prayer, and reading the word of God, and other instructive books, and occupied his

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spare time in the afterpart of the day in similar employments. He also attended the means of grace on the week nights, as well as on Sundays; sought counsel and instruction from his ministers, and getting his work done early, accompanied them to their appointments in the villages.

A MISSIONARY COLLECTOR.

The Methodist connexion at that time was being organised into a vast missionary society for the evangelization of the world.

As early as 1760, the work began twenty-one years before, had spread to the West Indies.

In 1769, among the preachers at the Conference in Leeds, the first collection was made to pay the passage of missionaries to the infant societies then being formed in the American Colonies, by Methodist emigrants from Ireland, and the foundations were laid of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America. Missions had also been commenced in what is now British America; also in Ireland, France, Spain, Africa, and India.

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The funds for this work had been raised principally by Dr. Coke and others; but no regular organization existed, till about the year 1815; when District and Circuit Auxiliaries began to be formed throughout the connexion.

James Marsden became one of the first collectors in Oldham. He says, "I was accustomed to spend three or four hours every Saturday evening, in going from door to door, calling on rich and poor, at private houses, and public houses, collecting for the missions."

For some time he worked alone; when he secured the aid of a colleague, to whom he had been made useful. "I saw him at the chapel, followed him, invited him to the prayer meeting, and then to the class meeting and when he was converted, he became my companion in collecting for the missions."

"A small thing that," some one may be disposed to say. Yes, small, when looked at by itself; and so is the drop of rain, which falls on the ridges and slopes of our hills; but

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millions of these drops, compose the rills and streams, which, flowing down surface, and chasm, and glen, swell the rivers, which adorn and fertilise our valleys, in their progress to the sea.

So, the small, and in themselves insignificant sums, gathered by our missionary collectors, adult and juvenile, form a large proportion of the £168,000, which the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society has this year raised, for sending and supporting missionaries, to teach and preach among the peoples of heathen, mahomedan, papal, and nominally protestant lands, "the gospel of the grace of God."

A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER.

It was in the Oldham Sunday school that Simeon Marsden first began to work for God, and here, as well as at home, James, with his brothers and sister, had been taught saving truths. Here also, Sunday after Sunday, for several years, he was found as "a teacher of good things."

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He had the first qualification essential to an efficient Sunday school teacher; he was converted to God and was also a member of the Church. Then, his views of the work were not satisfied by imparting mere secular instruction to the young; nor even by giving information on those subjects, which sustain but an incidental relation to the great spiritual realities disclosed by the light of revelation. To have done merely this would have been to dilate upon the casket, to the neglect of the jewel; to overlook the beauty of the painting, by confining attention to its frame. He sought to win the will for Jesus, —he sought the conversion of the scholars, and taught them truth appropriate to this object.

Besides what he did for this in the school, he gathered from the Bible classes a number of young people, from fifteen to twenty years of age, and met them at five o'clock on the Sabbath afternoon. He says, "I have seen from four to six conversions at one meeting, and for some time I had from thirty to forty of these under my care."

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A CLASS LEADER.

His regular appointment to this office took place in the year 1820. The following is his own account of the occasion, and of the mode of his induction :—

"An old leader had died suddenly. The class met two miles out of town. My father was asked to take charge of it, but could not, upon which I was requested to take it for a month. This was a great trial to me; as most of the members were aged, and had been in the Society thirty or forty years; while I was a young man of twenty-three; but being constrained to take the paper, I prevailed on my own leader to go with me every time, and lead the class.

"The month having expired, I sent the money and paper to Rev. Mr. McKitrick, and a note, saying, he must not expect me to go any more, as I was quite unfit for such an office. He returned the paper and money, and charged me to bring them to the leaders' meeting the following week, and to prepare myself for an examination, as he had fixed on me for the leader of the class.

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"This drove me to the Lord in earnest prayer; and when the time came, I went to the meeting. When I was called up before all the preachers, and leaders, to tell my experience, and my knowledge of the doctrines and discipline of Methodism, I burst into tears, and begged Mr. McKitrick not to appoint me a leader, as I really was not qualified; to which he replied, he did not want volunteers for leaders, they must be all pressed men.

"When my examination was over, several of the old leaders wept over me, saying, 'Take courage lad, it will drive thee to thy Bible and to thy knees;' and the first time I went alone, I several times fell on my knees, in the fields, crying for help; and I got through better than I expected."

But his sympathies were specially with the young people in the Sunday school; and he subsequently gathered a Society class from among them, and had the happiness of seeing several of them converted to God. He writes, "A. L. found peace with God

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on Monday evening; E. K. on Sunday morning at the prayer meeting; S. D. and A. H. on Monday evening at the band meeting; B. W. the same evening in private; and M. W. on Wednesday evening, while several of them were met together for prayer in the vestry." In one of these classes of young people, he was also the means of leading his sister to the Saviour.

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CHAPTER IX.

MARRIAGE AND MIGRATION.

JAMES MARSDEN was married to Hannah Booth on the 7th of December, 1823.

Next to conversion to God, the most important step in life, is marriage. Happiness or misery for eternity, as well as for time, often result from this. Through neglecting to acknowledge God in this matter, by seeking His direction, and acting upon the instructions of His Word, many young people have been shipwrecked here.

James Marsden saw this, and when he contemplated marriage, he says, "I was very anxious to get a partner who was a genuine Christian, and who would help me in the way to heaven. O how I prayed for Divine direction in my choice, that I might not be disappointed."

A few years before his death, he wrote, "I

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think it my duty to leave this record of my good wife, though she may live longer than myself, and I may not be able, through affliction or sudden death, to perform this, my duty." The following extract from this document shows us the qualities which attracted his affections and fixed his choice.

But first, a word about Mrs. Marsden's spiritual pedigree. Her mother was converted to God through the agency of Nanny Cutler, commonly called Praying Nanny, who was for some time a resident in Dewsbury, of whom a small memoir was written by Wm. Bramwell, and with whose prayers he associated a great outpouring of the Spirit of God, over parts of Yorkshire and adjacent counties.

"Hannah Booth was the subject of restraining grace from her infancy; but never enjoyed saving grace, till under the ministry of Mr. John Morris, she began to see and feel her need of a Saviour. She was for two or three months in great distress about her soul, but in the Oldham Wake's week, 1822,

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not having to go to work, she rose one morning about five o'clock, determined to continue in prayer, till God gave her a clear sense of acceptance with Him. She wrestled till nine o'clock, when by faith she beheld her Saviour, and found her burden gone. She spent the rest of the day, in going among her relations and friends, telling them what God had done for her soul, and there was great rejoicing in many homes."

A week after his marriage, he wrote, "I am thankful to God we did not enter into this state without much prayer, and advice from Christian friends; and I believe fully, that our union is of the Lord. May that God who has brought us together, enable us while we live, to live to His glory, and to help each other in the way that leads to joys on high."

In 1826, the hatting trade being disturbed in Oldham, James Marsden set out to seek a livelihood elsewhere. "By faith he went out not knowing whither he went." But He who guided Abraham, guided him. He left

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Oldham, March 15, on foot, and lodged that night at Ripponden. The next day he walked to Halifax, Elland, Huddersfield, and, contrary to his intention, when he left home, came on to Dewsbury. "On the road," he says, "I lifted up my heart to God, and He assured me I was in my right path. For more than a mile I never saw the road, my soul was so happy in God."

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CHAPTER X.

DEWSBURY—TOPOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL.

DEWSBURY, the future home of James Marsden for eight and forty years, is situated on the banks of the Calder, about an equal distance from Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield, Huddersfield, and Halifax. It is the centre of a populous district which includes, within a radius of three miles, Birstal, Batley, Batley Carr, Ossett, Thornhill Lees, Ravensthorpe, Mirfield, and Heckmondwike.

Dewsbury is a town of great antiquity, and from the times of the Saxon heptarchy, has held high rank in the ecclesiastical annals of Yorkshire. Paulinus, who was one of the band sent by Pope Gregory, with relics of Apostles and Martyrs, to assist Augustine in his mission for the conversion of the Saxons to the Christianity of Rome, and who, on July 21st, A.D. 625, was con-

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secrated in Kent the first Archbishop of York, visited the locality, preaching and baptizing.

Edwin, king of Northumbria, whose wife was the daughter of Ethelbert, the first Christian king of Kent, had a royal residence in the neighbourhood; and Paulinus came here as bishop and courtier. A cross was erected to commemorate his visit, which bore the following inscription,

"Paulinus hic Prædicavit et
Celebravit A.D. 627."

This cross was found many years ago, buried about a foot deep in the ground, a copy of which is now placed at the east end of All Saints Church.*

Dewsbury subsequently became a centre of ecclesiastical influence to a great part of Yorkshire, and the head of a parish, which extended twenty miles westward to Cliviger, among the mountains, between Halifax and Rochdale.

* Fuller's Church History, &c. Lewis's Topographical Dictionary.

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Hence the name Deus-burgh, or as it is called in Domesday-Book Dewsberia, and now Dewsbury.

The population of the district find employment in coal mines, stone quarries, iron works, glass works, and various other industries, but principally in the manufacture of heavy woollens, as blankets, carpets, rugs, and cloths of various kinds; and during the last twenty-five years, since the discovery of the mode of utilizing woollen wastes, by which woollen rags of all sorts are torn to fibres, and worked up with wool and hair and cotton into fabrics; it has become, from the money point of view, one of the most thriving districts in the kingdom, and the mungo and shoddy-opolis of the world. Handsome stone factories and warehouses of large size, and in great numbers, have sprung up on all sides; large and small fortunes have been realized; and the appearance of the whole neighbourhood, since James Marsden entered it, has been transformed.

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The district is mountainous. Its principal elevations in the neighbourhood of Dewsbury being the Moor, Staincliffe, Hanging Heaton, Crackenedge, Hollinroyd, Earlsheaton, Thornhill, and Whitley; from all which, variegated and extensive landscapes are visible.

"The vale of Calder; lovely vale, which now
Combines the sight of busy industry,
An active population; all the signs
Of energetic commerce; with such views
Of fine romantic scenery, that they,
Who 'mid the Alps have wander'd, and beheld
Its wondrous prospects, here admiring gaze.
And from the Bank Top near to Dewsbury
Pronounce the view so Swiss like, that they feel
As if again they stood on Alpine heights."

—Dr. Robinson.

One of the finest of these views is seen from Thornhill, looking towards Dewsbury. Thornhill is to the right hand of the station bearing that name, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, going towards Wakefield. Standing on what, in the locality, is called "the mountain," an exten-

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sive valley is spread out before you, through which flow river and canal, while trains on the trunk or branch lines of the Great Northern, the London and North Western, and the Lancashire and Yorkshire railways, are steaming, screaming, and flying to and fro.

Above this valley, to your right, is the table land, on which Ossett stands. At your feet is Thornhill Lees. Across the river is Dewsbury, rising from its banks in the form of a crescent, and advancing upwards to the Moor, which is being laid out in regular streets, on which are rising the villas of the successful tradesmen, merchants, and manufacturers of the neighbourhood. Between the Moor and Crackenedge is a deep valley, through which runs the London and North Western to Leeds, up which Batley Carr, Batley, and the hills which form the back ground of Birstal, are visible. On the left of the Moor is the valley of Heckmondwike, leading on to Cleckheaton and Bradford. The churches of the district add to the beauty of the scene, which, when

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hills, and fields, and trees are clothed in their spring costume, and the sun is unveiled by cloud, and the larks are soaring and singing above you, is one of the finest to be seen in the West Riding.

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CHAPTER XI.

METHODISM IN DEWSBURY.

In this chapter we propose to present a brief historical retrospect of that church, in which, for nearly half a century, James Marsden was a good and faithful servant.

The agent employed by the Head of the church, in commencing in Yorkshire the great spiritual revival of the last century, was John Nelson, a stone mason of Birstal.*

Nelson was converted under the preaching of John Wesley during his residence as a journeyman in London. He returned to Birstal about Christmas, 1740, and told his relatives that he had no more doubt of the pardon of his sins, than he had of the shining of the sun.

This was a rare experience in these parts in those days, and Nelson's confession of the great things the Lord had done for him,

* See Journal of John Nelson, Wesleyan Conference Office.

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became the subject of general conversation among his neighbours.

His relations begged him to be quiet, telling him no one would believe him, and that they were ashamed to be seen in the streets, for the people were upbraiding them with his sayings. His mother told him his head was turned. He replied, "Yes, thank God, and my heart too." He reproved sin when committed in his presence, and his wife wished him either to go back to London or to give up abusing his neighbours.

In the evenings, when he returned from his work, he found his house filled with people, who had come for enquiry and disputation. This put him upon proving that his experience was in harmony with the doctrines of the Articles and Homilies of the Church of England on this subject, and with the Word of God. The visitors increasing in numbers, he stood at his door, and in the open air, on the Lord's day, as well as on week evenings, declared to the people the wonderful works of God.

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Mr. Ingham, who in 1732 was one of the original band of Methodists at Oxford, and who was now exercising his ministry in Birstal and its neighbourhood, remonstrated with John for telling the people that they might know their sins forgiven.

Nelson replied, "I will tell all I can, that there is such a prize to be run for. When I found God's wrath removed for the sake of His dear Son, I saw provision enough for my poor perishing soul, and for all the world, if they would come for it. I believe it is a sin, not to declare to the children of men what God has done for my soul, that they may seek the same mercy."

Mr. Ingham advised him to be still for a month. He answered, "I will with one proviso. If you can persuade the devil to be still for a month; but if he 'goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,' and God has put a sword into my hands, I am determined to attack him wherever I meet him, and where I meet sin I meet Satan."

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The Lord set His seal to His servant's testimony. The first brought to experience the great salvation was his brother, then six of his neighbours, then his wife and his mother, and for several weeks in succession six or seven were converted in a week.

He then began to extend his labours to surrounding villages and towns, one of which was Dewsbury.

For several Sunday mornings in the year 1741, one Simeon Thornbank had observed a company of men passing his house, who came up the old road from Thornhill Lees. One morning he asked, whither they were bound? "To Birstal to hear John Nelson," was the reply. Thornbank went with them, and invited Nelson to Dewsbury, offering his own house for a service.

Nelson accepted the invitation, and during the week was there, clad neither in gown, bands, nor broad cloth, but in his every day apparel, a belt round his waist, in which were thrust hammer and trowel, symbols of the spiritual tools he employed, and

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to a company of poor people, told God's way of salvation.

Nelson wrote to Mr. Wesley and requested, as "he was his father in the gospel, that he would give him some instruction how to proceed in the work that God had begun by such an unpolished tool," and the next Wednesday, May 26th, 1742, Wesley was sitting at Nelson's fire side, and in the evening preached in the house of Tommy Smith, on Dewsbury moor, and the next week, on June 3rd, at Mirfield.

The first Methodist chapel in Dewsbury was built in Daw Green, and opened by Peter Jaco in 1763, and within its walls, now standing, Wesley preached. I am indebted to Dr. Robinson for the following account of its origin. Two sisters, of the name of Elice, who were owners of some land in Daw Green, were accustomed to attend the services at Birstal; one of whom saw in a dream, a spring of water well out of the ground, on which Birstal Chapel stood; which flowing down the valley passed Batley

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and Batley Carr, and then flowed up the hill side until it reached their property in Daw Green. Dreaming this more than once, her mind was so impressed with its singularity, that she appropriated it as a site for a chapel.

The cause here was aided by grants from the Contingent Fund, which was originated by Wesley in 1744, and formed of a yearly collection in the classes, for promoting the extension of the work over the country.

The grants were published every year in the "Minutes," where Daw Green appears one year as the recipient of £50, and another year of £100; thus shewing that Dewsbury, like so many now flourishing Circuits, was, when in its infancy, fostered by that venerable nurse, who, having several times changed her name, is now known as the "Home Mission and Contingent Fund."

Daw Green chapel gave place to one opened in 1782 opposite the present school buildings in Wellington Road. This chapel was not properly secured to the Connexion, and in 1788 was misappropriated to the use of

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John Atlay, and the cause was for some time in great straits.* Dewsbury had been made the head of a Circuit in 1785, but from 1788 it disappears from the list of Circuits for three years, during which time it was re-incorporated with Birstal.

The third chapel was built in Westgate, and how the funds were raised, the following questions and answers in the Minutes of 1789 shew:

Q. "What directions are to be given concerning the building of preaching houses?

A. "We do not permit any preaching houses to be built this year, except one at Dewsbury and those already begun or set on foot. Again,

Q. "What directions are to be given concerning the building of a new preaching house at Dewsbury?

A. "Let every Assistant (Superintendent) make a public and private collection in his Circuit for the purpose, as soon as possible."

* Only two members adhered to Mr. Wesley, a man and his wife, of the name of Drake. See Memoir of Rev. Jos. Entwistle.

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But they did not stay till they reached their Circuits. A subscription was at once opened amongst the preachers at the Conference, to which others subsequently added their names. The sum thus raised was £209. Wesley and Coke contributed £50 each. The number of preachers who subscribed was 139, and included Thomas Rankin, William Thompson, Henry Moore, Alexander Mather, Samuel Bradburn, William Bramwell, Joseph Benson, Adam Clarke, and many other men of renown.

The following is a copy of a letter of John Wesley, in the possession of Dr. Robinson, containing a reference to this chapel:—

"London, June 2, 1790.

"My dear Brother,

"It is no wonder many of y^e^ Societies should be in poor condition, considering what poor care has lately been taken of them. They will soon find the difference. The books that are damaged you may give away as you judge proper. None ought to have made a collection for any place whatever

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before the house of Dewsbury was built. However do what you can and you do enough.

"I am with love to S. Jackson,

"Your affectionate friend and brother,

"J. WESLEY."

In 1791 (the year of Wesley's death) Dewsbury again appears as the head of a Circuit, with seraphic William Bramwell for superintendent, and George Sykes for his colleague. Sykes was succeeded as Bramwell's colleague, by John Nelson, the second of that name, from whom John Smith learned some of his arts in soul saving. Bramwell stayed here two years, and then removed to Birstal for a similar period. There were great outpourings of the Spirit in those days, as the following numbers shew. In 1791 the members in the two Circuits were 1230. In 1795, when Bramwell left Birstal, they had increased to 2220.

The trustees of Wellington Road chapel finding themselves in great pecuniary difficulties, offered to restore the chapel, and

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being the more convenient of the two, it was taken back, with an accumulated debt, and in 1840 was sold, when the noble Centenary chapel was opened.

The Sunday school was commenced in 1799. A school house was erected in 1826, and rebuilt on the same site in 1864, and is one of the largest in the connexion.

Ossett, with one of the best chapels in the Leeds District, was separated from Dewsbury and made the head of a Circuit in 1869.

During the last two years and a half, small chapels have given place to larger ones at Thornhill Lees and Batley Carr, at a cost of £6,543, and containing accommodation for 1400 persons. A site has also been secured for a new chapel and schools on Moorlands, and a subscription commenced for a larger chapel at Earlsheaton. The last quarterly meeting also appointed a committee to secure better accommodation for the Society at the mission room in Savile Town, a new district of Dewsbury.

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The Circuit at present has nine chapels and four mission rooms, with accommodation for 5,000 hearers. The number of members is 1,183, of leaders 81, and 37 local preachers. The number of Sunday scholars 2,514, of teachers 468, and the libraries contain 2,414 volumes. The annual cost of the schools is £307 18s. 7d.

Other Methodist bodies, as the New Connexion and the Primitives, have a good status, especially the former, and are also working with Congregationalists, Baptists, and Episcopalians, in extending the dominion of our divine Redeemer.

MINISTERS WHO HAVE LABOURED IN THE DEWSBURY CIRCUIT.

1785 R. Roberts, T. Tennant
1786 P. Greenwood, J. Parkin
1787 P. Greenwood, W. Percival
1788 With Birstal
1789 With Birstal
1790 With Birstal
1791 W. Bramwell, C. Sykes
1792 W. Bramwell, J. Nelson
1793 E. Jackson, J. Nelson
1794 E. Jackson, C. Gloyne
1795 J. Mason, R. Hopkins
1796 J. Brown, B. Newton

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1797 J. Crosby, W. Heath
1798 J. Crosby, W. Heath
1799 R. Millar, W. Moulton
1800 R. Millar, W. Moulton
1801 F. Wrigley, J. Goodwin
1802 J. Goodwin, J. King
1803 J. Crook, W. Radcliffe
1804 W. Hainsworth, W. Radcliffe
1805 W. Hainsworth, T. Wilton
1806 C. Kirkpatrick, J. Hughes
1807 C. Kirkpatrick, J. Parkinson
1808 J. Nelson, J. Williams
1809 J. Nelson, J. Williams, W. Ault
1810 J. Nelson, S. Hope, J. Armitage
1811 T. Ingham, S. Hope, J. Armitage
1812 T. Ingham, J. Everett, T. Hewitt
1813 T. Bartholomew, J. Lilly, T. Hill
1814 T. Bartholomew, J. Lilly, T. Hill
1815 J. Farrar, T. Skelton, A. Freeman
1816 J. Booth, W. Tranter, T. Skelton
1817 J. Booth, J. Brookhouse
1818 J. Brookhouse, H. Ranson
1819 J. Simpson, H. Ranson
1820 J. Simpson, W. Smith
1821 J. McDonald. W. Smith
1822 E. Jones, J. Draper
1823 E. Jones, J. Mortimer
1824 J. Williams, J. Mortimer
1825 J. Williams, J. Mortimer
1826 C. Gloyne, C. Kirkpatrick
1827 C. Gloyne, J. B. Holroyd
1828 A. Floyd, J. B. Holroyd
1829 A. Floyd, J. Wilson
1830 A. Floyd, J. Wilson
1831 J. Fairburn, F. Derry
1832 J. Fairburn, C. Radcliffe
1833 J. Simpson, C. Radcliffe
1834 J. Simpson, C. Radcliffe

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1835 J. Simpson, D. Chapman
1836 F. Hill, D. Chapman
1837 F. Hill, J. Ward
1838 C. Hawthorne, J. Ward
1839 C. Hawthorn, S. Rowe, W. Steadman
1840 T. Murray, S. Rowe, T. Cryer
1841 T. Murray, S. Rowe, T. Cryer
1842 T. Murray, J. Walker. T. Hesk
1843 J. Woodcock, J. Walker, S. Brocksop
1844 J. Woodcock, J. Sumner, S. Brocksop
1845 J. Pretty, J. Sumner, E. Jackson
1846 J. Pretty, J. Sumner, E. Jackson
1847 J. Pretty, C. Radcliffe, E. Jackson
1848 R. Heape, W. J. Shrewsbury, W. Dawson
1849 R. Heape, W. J. Shrewsbury, W. Dawson
1850 R. Heape, W. J. Shrewsbury, W. Dawson
1851 T. Hodson, W. Chambers, H. Kirkland
1852 T. Hodson, T. Richardson, H. Kirkland
1853 J. Floyd, J. W. Thomas, T. B. Goodwin
1854 J. Floyd, J. W, Thomas, T. B. Goodwin
1855 J. Floyd, J. Connon, T. B. Goodwin
1856 S. Allen, J. Connon, G. A. Page
1857 S. Allen, J. Connon, G. A. Page
1858 S. Allen, J. Morris, G. A. Page
1859 T. Hardy, J. Morris, T. Talbot
1860 T. Hardy, J. Fletcher, T. Talbot
1861 T. Hardy, J. Fletcher, T. Talbot
1862 T. Pearson, J. Fletcher, W. Shaw
1863 T. Pearson, W. Shaw, E. Workman
1864 T. Pearson, W. Shaw, E. Workman
1865 W. Exley, S. Cocks, E. Workman
1866 W. Exley, S. Cocks, J. M. Bamford
1867 W. Exley, S. Cocks, J. M. Bamford
1868 E. Oldfield, J. S. Banks, J. M. Bamford
1869 E. Oldfield, J. S. Banks, C. O. Eldridge
1870 E. Oldfield, J. S. Banks, J. H. Morgan
1871 G. Scott, A. Freeman, J. H. Morgan
1872 G. Scott, A. Freeman, J. H. Morgan
1873 G. Scott, A. Freeman E. J. Brailsford

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CHAPTER XII.

LIFE IN LODGINGS.

For want of promptitude in the avowal of their principles, many professors of religion, on changing their place of residence, have imperilled their consistency, and been drawn aside from the narrow way, by the temptations which have beset them in their new circumstances. But the principles of James Marsden were too deeply rooted to allow of such defection on his part, as his conduct in his lodgings, in the workshop, and in the Church, shows.

On the day of his arrival in Dewsbury, March 16, 1826, he secured employment of Mr. Oates, a flourishing hat manufacturer in those days; he then obtained lodgings at the house of one James Metcalf; and in the evening, after a walk of twelve miles that day, he heard a sermon in the chapel in Wellington Road.

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James Metcalf was not a professor of religion; and, consequently, had no family worship.

This was a new thing to James Marsden. For twenty-six years, under the roof of his father, and for three years with his wife, he had been accustomed, morning and evening, to the reading of the Word of God, and prayer; but he now found himself in a family, where they did not call upon the name of the Lord.

Before he went to his work the next morning, he says, "As I sat at breakfast, it was very powerfully impressed upon my mind, to request James, to allow me to pray with the family, but my heart panted within me for some minutes before I could do so.

"At last I took courage, and said, 'James, we have always been accustomed to family prayer at home, and I should be glad if you would allow me to have it here.'

"He said, 'very well, I am quite agreeable.' At these words I was exceeding glad, and got the New Testament, and read a few

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verses. We then knelt down and my soul was at liberty, and the throne of grace accessible.

"After using family prayer, morning and evening for some time, James' heart began to be affected; and, frequently, when he rose from his knees, his face was bathed in tears. I gave him all the encouragement I could, pointing him to the Lamb of God, and induced him to go with me to the chapel.

"One evening, going from my work a little before eight o'clock, I said, 'James, will you go with me to the meeting to-night.' He said, 'I have no objection.' When we got to the chapel, I said, "James, this is a class meeting.' He darted back, and said, 'I think I shall go home. I am not fit to go there.' I told him he was one of the characters for whom class meetings were designed. With much persuasion, I prevailed upon him to go, on condition that I would request Mr. Joshua Robinson, the leader, not to speak to him. When the meeting was over, he said, he had enjoyed it,

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and was sorry he had made the request, for he thought he could have opened his mind to Mr. Robinson.

"From that time he attended with great punctuality; and at the meeting in the beginning of July, after he had sought the Lord for nearly three months, while the leader and members were engaged in prayer in his behalf, he was enabled to believe with his heart, unto righteousness. At family prayer that night, we had a precious season. He was so happy in the love of God, that, for some time, he could do nothing but praise the Lord, who had brought him out of the horrible pit, and set him upon the Rock of Ages.

"He died in peace January 31st, 1829. aged 33."

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CHAPTER XIII.

LIFE IN BUSINESS.

Mr. Marsden has left little information concerning his secular business affairs, and what we know will be briefly told.

On applying at the premises of Mr. O., on the day of his arrival, that gentleman, hearing his application, said, "I will give that man work; he has a good coat upon his back; most of the hatters are clothed in rags through drunkenness."

A great trial, however, awaited him. He had to work with irreligious and profane men, who, when they found that he was a Methodist, one with a strong moral backbone, without a curve, and who could and did resist all their endeavours to draw him into their ways, resorted to various petty annoyances to drive him from the premises. But he obtained the confidence of his em-

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ployers, (he especially names the eldest son) who showed him kindness, and encouraged him to remain.

In about three months, believing himself to be in the way of Providence, he fetched Mrs. Marsden, and his household furniture from Oldham, and remained in the service of Mr. Oates about two years.

He then commenced business for himself in Westgate, and by dint of industry, and the good management of his thrifty wife, in the course of eighteen years, succeeded in saving several hundred pounds. By an error of judgment, without any moral fault of his own, but, to use his own words, "without sufficient thought, and prayer, and consultation with friends;" he too generously placed this at the disposal of another, and in about two years lost all.

He was thus suddenly plunged into the deepest perplexity and distress. He needed a friend, and how he found one, he thus relates.

"I went to my closet and was on my

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knees more than two hours, pleading the promises of God. Light broke into my mind. It was as though a voice from heaven said to me 'Go to Messrs. M. O. and Sons, they will be thy friends.'

"I followed the direction, found them all in their counting-house, and told my case.

"'Come again in an hour,' was the reply.

"I went back to my closet, and returned at the time appointed with the greatest confidence.

"'We have considered your case,' said one of the sons; 'and have agreed to lend you £ ——' (naming double the amount asked for). 'Pay us back at your convenience. We want no security and no interest. We believe you to be a thoroughly honest man, and if you had told us your case sooner, we would have saved you the anxiety you have endured.'"

So much, young men, for a good reputation!

Thus set upon his feet, he again went on his way. Sympathy was excited; the tide

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of prosperity rose higher than before; and in a short time the loan was repaid.

James Marsden's God, who heard his cry for direction, and told him where to go; whose eye watched the whole proceeding; and whose hand wrote it in the book of His remembrance, has since paid the interest a hundred fold, and confirmed His word, that "He that giveth a cup of cold water to a disciple, in the name of a disciple"—as this was doubtless done—"shall in no wise lose his reward."

It adds to the gracefulness of this generous act that its agents were members of a communion other than that to which the recipient belonged.

Mr. Marsden had no children to provide for. His own needs were few, and he was not ambitious of riches. What others would have considered poverty, he would regard as superfluous wealth. He saw that happiness was not bought, nor brought by gold. Spiritual and eternal riches were his pursuit, both for himself, and for others; and he

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agreed with his good wife, that if the Lord should enable them to save enough, to give them a house to live in, rent free, with food and raiment, and something to give away, that he would give up business as a hatter, and devote the rest of his days to the business of saving souls, especially the souls of the poor, and sick, and dying. In about twelve years he realised his wishes and fulfilled his vows, to the everlasting advantage of many.

The following shows that one of the business principles of Mr. Marsden was keeping holy the Sabbath day. It was in the month of December, soon after he entered into business. He had a bill of £9 to pay on the Monday. Saturday was a very rough day, and little or no business was done.

"On Sunday morning, as I was going to chapel, a customer came, and wanted to buy a hat, and other articles; telling me that his father was to be buried that day, and that he only received his wages at eleven o'clock on the previous night.

"I told him that on no account would I sell on the Sabbath day.

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"He pleaded hard, but I was firm.

"On the Monday I had customers that more than paid me the money I wanted. This I was sure was in answer to earnest prayer. Many other times after this, I was was similarly situated, and as signally delivered."

Speaking of the assistance rendered by his wife, he says, "She showed good judgment and remarkable foresight. She was strictly honest and upright, in every little thing. She was economical and saving, not allowing anything to be wasted. She was a great helper both in buying and selling. She had a good knowledge of the business, and could go to Oldham, Manchester, Leeds, and other markets, and buy hats, caps, kerchiefs, and ties, or any other thing in our business. She was a helpmate indeed, both in temporal and spiritual things."

But Mrs. Marsden was often the subject of affliction. Writing on his seventy-first birthday with reference to this, he describes a domestic scene, which exhibits the affection,

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which, on both sides, lighted up their homes in times of affliction and trial.

"One evening all but myself thought she was going home to glory. She said she would tell me a few things while she could speak. She then gave directions respecting the disposal of her garments, and other things. It was a solemn occasion, and I wept most of the time.

"'Now, Hannah,' said I, 'is there anything else?'

"She said, 'Yes, I know thou canst not do without a wife in thy business. In three or four months after I am gone, I advise thee to look out for a suitable person, and marry her. Thou hast done thy duty to me in every respect since I knew thee, and when I am gone thou canst do no more.'

"I then said, 'Hannah, I will tell thee my opinion. I fully believe thou will get better; will wear out all thy clothes; and want plenty more. Thou wilt be better in the morning, and thou wilt continue to mend.'

"'O James,' said she, 'No one besides thee thinks so.'

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"I said, 'No one prays for thee as I do; and I fully believe, that if my God was going to take thee, he would have told me so; for I always feel very happy when praying for thy recovery.'

"She began to mend that night; and I got a house in the country for two or three years, that she might be free from the business, and she has been better ever since."

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CHAPTER XIV.

LIFE IN THE CHURCH.—DEWSBURY.

During the last week of our Lord's earthly life, surrounded by His Apostles, on the Mount of Olives, He compared himself to "a man going into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered to them his goods," and who "after a long time returned and reckoned with them."

The goods he delivered them were His Spirit and His Word; the "grace and truth," which "came by Jesus Christ." He gave these "to every man"—"His own servants"—that each might use them, "according to his ability," in the prosecution of his spiritual mission—for every servant has his spiritual mission in the world.

Those who in all ages have professed to be His servants, have been distinguished either as "wicked, slothful, and unprofitable; digging in the earth and hiding their

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Lord's money;" or as "good and faithful," who have gone and "traded" with their capital, and increased it, by bringing others to believe the facts, accept the overtures, and obey the injunctions of the gospel.

The good and faithful servants of the Apostolic times, were models for their successors in all future ages; and how they traded, the "Acts" and "Epistles" shew. They exemplified the images, by which our Lord in His parables illustrates the work assigned them.

They traded as FISHERMEN; sometimes with the line and hook, and at other times with the net; adapting bait and net to the fish they sought to take:—as BUILDERS, blasting the rock, shaping the stones, and laying them, one by one, upon the foundation which God has laid in Zion;—as SOLDIERS, seeking to recover a revolted world to the sceptre of Him "who loveth righteousness and hateth wickedness;"—as MERCHANTS, with the merchandise of wisdom, "eyesalve" for the blind, "robes of righteousness" for

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the naked, "bread of life" and "water of life" for the perishing, and "wine and milk" for the faint; offering these "unsearchable riches of Christ" to all, "without money and without price."

How James Marsden traded with his Lord's goods, from the time he came to Dewsbury till the time he left for a better country, we will now indicate.

A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER.

He joined the Sunday school in Dewsbury immediately upon his arrival in 1826.

The government of the school at that time, as in the case of most other schools, was characterized by a severity which has given place to a milder system. The strap and the stick, long and strong ones too, were then in frequent, vigorous, and sometimes, to lookers on, somewhat ludicrous use, of which the following, related by eye witnesses, furnish specimens.

One culprit was sometimes compelled to take another upon his back, and carry him

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across the room, accompanied by the superintendent with strap or stick, which he used as his judgment or feeling might dictate. When they reached the end of their journey the two lads had to change moods. The active became passive and the passive active, and the same process was repeated on the return journey.

But all were not equally severe. One Sunday, it devolved upon a "spirit finely touched," to administer discipline. But, as might have been expected, he did it in a very unimpressive way; the agreeableness of which, to the culprit, was manifest from certain facial signs. Another brother, also in authority, but cast in a different mould, was standing by; and fearing lest the intended correction should fail, he seized the rod, saying, "Here let go, let me try;" and he laid on with an energy which altered the expression of the lad's countenance by bringing other emotions into play.

An offender was sometimes made to stand on one leg, on a form in front of the desk,

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and facing the school, with both arms erect, and a Bible in each hand. One day, some half dozen were standing thus, in a line. The boy at one end of the form, lost his equilibrium and fell against his neighbour, and so on to the end, and in a moment they were all in a heap upon the floor.

Different men are differently constituted, and however necessary correction was, and it was necessary, on the principle of "a whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back;" the mode of its administration is another question; and the way in which punishment was sometimes inflicted, went again the grain of the soul, and was like sand in the teeth of James Marsden.

At the right time and place, and in the right spirit, he remonstrated against this, but was told by some that the lads could not be governed by any other means.

James Marsden thought otherwise, and proposed that they should select a score of the worst lads, and let him try the power of kindness.

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This was acceded too; and he says "The next Sabbath I had several of the worst boys at my side. I told them I was to be their teacher every Sabbath, and neither the superintendent nor myself would use the stick; that I wanted them to be a pattern of good behaviour, and I should reward them with books. I succeeded well, and was buying new books every week.

Some years after one of these lads grown to manhood was with another in Mr. Marsden's shop, and pointing to the latter, said to his companion "This is the man who conquered me, when I was an ungovernable boy in the Sunday school; and he did it by his kindness."

On the other hand a man once accosted the son of one who, as a superintendent, had been greatly tried by the "lads" he sought to train; and said, "I respect you for your father's sake, who gave me many a good hiding."

It appears from the papers of Mr. Marsden that at the time he came to Dewsbury

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it was not customary to give religious addresses to the scholars; many schools at that time being more secular than now. Day schools were not so plentiful then, and it was customary in many places to teach writing and arithmetic on the Lord's day. In his view the Sunday school was a religious, and ought to be a converting institution; and in conjunction with others, of whom he names Samuel Fletcher and Edward Day, he began the good custom of giving addresses to the scholars on spiritual themes; a practice he continued throughout his life, and in which he was effective and popular.

He also met a select class for elder boys, who were rising into manhood; several of whom have rendered long service to the cause of Christ, and are now amongst the most influential office bearers in the Society, besides occupying honourable, commercial, and municipal rank in the town.

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A PRAYER LEADER.

The prayer leaders of Methodism constitute a part of the rank and file of its army, who have rendered effective service from the beginning.

They help to sustain the regular weekly prayer meeting, which has been designated the thermometer of the church. They assist in the meetings after the public service in the chapels on the Sunday evenings; and conduct meetings in cottages in the back streets of our towns and cities, also in workhouses and mission rooms.

There are numerous Societies with large chapels and schools, in London and in other places, which were originated by meetings conducted by prayer leaders, and the same process is now going on in various localities.

The following incidents illustrate Mr. Marsden's services in this capacity.

It was at a cottage prayer meeting, during his earlier years in Dewsbury, when he succeeded in bringing out from his privacy the late excellent Nathan Child.

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How he brought him out he thus relates: "I laid hold of him one Sunday night after the public service, and prevailed upon him to go with me to a cottage meeting in Daw Green. The house was filled. The power of God was present. I called on Brother Child to pray. He said, 'You must excuse me, as I never have prayed publicly in a meeting.' I said, 'You must begin and try.' He hesitated. Others wished to pray. I said, "No one must pray till Brother Child has prayed. He cried out, "Lord help me?' The people said 'Amen!' 'Lord help me!' repeated Child. 'Amen!' again responded the people. Help came; he had a good time, and we were all in tears."

Mr. Child subsequently became superintendent of the Sunday school, leader of several classes, and a circuit steward. An esteemed ex-circuit steward, and the present equally estimable senior circuit steward, were trained as leaders in the classes of Mr. Child.

Towards the close of his life he frequently

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said to Mr. Marsden, "I should never have been any thing, but a cumberer of the ground, or an idler in the Society, but for you."

In the instruction of awakened sinners at the prayer meetings after the public service in the chapel, our departed friend often rendered invaluable aid to the ministers. Speaking of him since his decease, a brother said to the writer, "It was while Mr. Marsden was praying for me, with his hand on my shoulder, one Sunday night ten years ago, after a sermon by the Rev. James Sugden, and crying out 'Lord bless this lad! Save this lad!' that I received the assurance of pardon." That lad has now possession of one of the classes raised by Mr. Marsden, in which he is training more than thirty souls for service in the church on earth and in heaven.

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CHAPTER XV.

LIFE IN THE CHURCH CONTINUED.

A CLASS LEADER.

PERHAPS no providential arrangements for the application of principles laid down in the word of God, for meeting the cravings of the spiritual life for Christian communion, have ever been of greater service than class meetings.

They were instituted in their present form for the help of those who, under the preaching of the Wesleys, were seeking to "work out their own salvation with fear and trembling;" and persons are admitted as members, who agree to regulate their lives by the law of the divine word, as summarised in the rules of the Societies.

The class meeting, in the hands of a leader whose heart glows with love to

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Christ and souls, and who attends to the injunction of the Apostle, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord;" (which might have been addressed to a class-meeting church at Collosse);—furnishes opportunities for enquirers in the way to Zion, like those which Christian had with Help at the Slough of Despond; with Evangelist at the hill, out of which flashed fire; with Goodwill at the Wicket Gate; with Interpreter at his house; and with Discretion, Prudence, Piety, and Charity, at the Palace called Beautiful.

Here, while listening to others telling what God has done for their souls, the ignorant have been instructed, the feeble strengthened, the weary refreshed, the sorrowful comforted, the wavering decided, and tens of thousands have been built up in their most holy faith.

Besides fostering the spiritual life in in-

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dividual members, class meetings have formed nurseries, in which thousands have been trained for spiritual service; abilities have been developed which otherwise might have remained dormant; and thus the working power of the Church has been increased, and the Societies have been knit together as by joints and bands.

A gentleman who is a member of the Methodist Society had to spend a night in a town in one of the Midland Counties, and availed himself of the opportunity to hear a distinguished Congregational minister. The congregation was not large (it was the ordinary week-night service,) and consisting, as it did for the most part, of members of the Church, he said he should not preach to them; but should come round and speak to them one by one. He came to this gentleman, and enquired after his spiritual welfare. From his reply the minister said—"I infer that you are a Methodist," and was told his inference was correct. At the close of the service the

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visitor went into the vestry, and said to the minister "Why don't you adopt the class meeting?" "I could not get leaders," said he. "Not get leaders out of such a Church as yours!" "No." "How do you get them?" "We grow them," was the reply.

We have seen how Mr. Marsden was inducted into the office of a class leader at Oldham. When he had been about three months in Dewsbury, he was appointed to the charge of a class which met on a Sunday morning in a house on Dewsbury Moor. The tenant removing, and no other house being available, the members went to other classes; and he took charge of one at Earlsheaton, which the circuit book shows was doubled in three months.

An incident occurred in connection with this class, which illustrates his sympathy with the poor members of the household of faith.

One Sunday morning, he noticed the depression of two of his members, a man

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and his wife, in whose house the class met. When the rest were gone he asked them the cause of their sorrow. The poor man said he had been out of work for some weeks, and they were without food. Their three children had gone to school without breakfast, and there was no dinner for them when they came home.

Mr. Marsden hastened to his wife, who was just going to chapel. He told the case, and obtained her consent to his taking a meat pie, which she had prepared for their own dinner; to which he added a loaf, butter, tea, sugar, and bacon, which he put into a basket, and carried off to the comfort of the distressed parents. But he and his wife had to dine on bread, butter, and coffee, and he said "I never enjoyed a dinner more."

In 1831 he commenced a class at his own house, in Westgate; and to obtain members he wrote letters to Sunday school teachers who were not in the Society.

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"You see the ways the fisherman doth take
To catch the fish. What engines he doth make!
Behold how, he engageth all his wits;
Also his snares, lines, angles, hooks, and nets;
Yet fish there be that neither hook, nor line,
Nor snare, nor net, nor engine, can make thine;
They must be groped for, and be tickled too,
Or they will not be catched, whate'er you do."

Nor did he write in vain. Several were taken by this appeal, and some of them became prominent and useful members of the Church. Most of them have finished their course; but one remains, a venerable matron, Mrs. R. of Staincliffe, from whom I received this information.

This class subsequently removed to the vestry of the chapel, and so grew, that in time its division was necessary.

At the quarterly visitation, after his retirement from business in 1861, in addition to forty-two members, he had twenty-four on trial. In December of that year, his class was again divided, one being met by himself on the Monday, and the other on the Tuesday evening. In March, 1868, failing

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health compelled him to resign his Monday evening class, with thirty-six members; himself retaining the other, with twenty-four. In March, 1869, these had risen to forty-two. In March, 1872, when his work as a leader was finished, he had forty-seven members, with seven on trial.

His classes were sometimes the scenes of holy excitement, of which we give one example.

A young man had met for a long time, but was wanting in the faith to which the Holy Spirit gives the assurance of pardon. Week after week the substance of his reply to the enquiry of the leader was, "I am not satisfied that God has pardoned my sins."

One night, when the class room was so full, that a form had to be brought for the accommodation of those present, the usual enquiry was proposed, and the usual answer expected, but during the week, the young man had learned to sing the new song, and instead of the customary "not satisfied," he exclaimed,

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"My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear,
He owns me for his child,
I can no longer fear;
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba Father, cry!"

Mr. Marsden rose from his seat and shouted, "Glory! Glory be to God! Let us praise God," said he, and the class rose and sang, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow, &c.," when they knelt down, and added prayer to praise.

As a leader he acted on the principles embodied in the advice to leaders prefixed to the class books. He would not let his members rest without a clear sense of acceptance with God, and was constantly urging them to "leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ and go on to perfection." He visited absentees, followed up backsliders, and was continually seeking to bring new members into the fold. He also attended the leaders' meetings with regularity, and obtained pecuniary assistance from the poor's fund for those in need.

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He religiously looked after the financial contributions of his members, — pity that any should give their leaders this trouble!— He knew that while Christ had redeemed the world with the ransom of His own life, that He had left to the Church the expense, and privilege, and honour, and responsibility of its evangelization; and that, in keeping their obligations before them, he was serving his members, as well as the Church, and the world. His own rule was to give "according to his ability," and, though his means were small, he did not limit himself to the old rule, which when made a rule, was equal to twice or thrice the present value of money.

An inspired Apostle concluded his sublime discourse on the subject of the resurrection of the saints, with "now concerning the collection;" and we feel warranted in saying here that there is great inequality between the measure of support given to Church funds and the apparent ability of some persons.

Here is a poor working man with weekly

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wages, besides giving to all public collections, giving half-a-crown as his quarterage, and his penny a week to the ordinary Circuit funds, and others with tenfold larger means, and no families, limiting themselves to the minimum amount.

The New Testament law is "Upon the first day of the week, let *every one* of you, lay by him in store *as God hath prospered him*," and persons as their means increase, and who increase their personal expenditure, should augment their contributions to promote the spread of Christianity in the world.

A domestic servant went to her mistress, and asked her to advance a shilling of her wages. "What for, Mary?" "It is ticket night, Ma'am." "O, Mary, I thought you only gave sixpence." "That is what I did give, Ma'am, but you see I have bought a new bonnet, and since I can afford that, I can afford to increase my quarterage."

On this subject Mr. Marsden wrote, "I gave to the cause of God to the utmost of my power. I was always glad when there

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was a collection on the Sabbath, after a good business on the Saturday; and when there was no collection at the chapel, I gave my offering to the Lord as first fruits. I once went to one of our chapels to a love-feast, and when the collection was made for the poor, I put in half-a-crown. The leader sent for me into the vestry, and asked me if I knew what I had put into the box. I said yes, half-a-crown. He said he thought I had made a mistake, thinking it was a penny, and that he was prepared to return it for a penny. I said it was all right, and he thanked me kindly.

"Sometimes I have sent money in letters for the mission cause, and for the old preachers and widows' fund, without a name. I always gave with prudence and in earnest prayer for the Divine blessing on my small offerings."

A LOCAL PREACHER.

Want of space forbids us to say all that could be said of Mr. Marsden's work as a

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local preacher. He began to give addresses in public, where so many others have begun, in the Sunday school. In 1830 he made his first essay as an exhorter, to a congregation of adults in a cottage in the village of Chickenley, and two years after was received as an accredited local preacher.

He made copious use of the pen in preparing for the pulpit, for the platform of village missionary meetings, and for the desk of the Sunday school. Many of his M.S. sermons have been destroyed, but of those which remain, some especially, indicate very careful preparation. They are well constructed, full of the saving and experimental truths of the Gospel, abounding with well selected passages of Scripture, illustrated with anecdotes and metaphors, gathered from reading and his own observation, driven home in forceful yet tender applications, to the different classes of his hearers, and redolent with that unction which can only be obtained in secret intercourse with God.

He was welcome everywhere; and was

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often in request for anniversary sermons in the villages. He was a special favourite with young people, whose attention he secured at the outset and kept till the close; attracting them by his racy stories, his quaint observations, his tender tones, and his winning smiles. "We shall have no trouble with the school children to-day," said one teacher to another, "Mr. Marsden is the preacher."

But his efforts to benefit the people, when fulfilling his appointments, were not over when he left the pulpit. The spirit which actuated him there, influenced him in the families by whom he was entertained. Two or three extracts from his papers are sufficient to illustrate this: "Going with an old pilgrim to get tea, I spoke to all the family about their souls. I was blessed in prayer with them, and when we rose from our knees they were all bathed in tears." Again, "Several were with us at brother C.'s, and the Lord gave us much liberty in prayer." Again, "At dinner with one of the members my soul was much blessed while relating a

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little of my experience." Referring to an occasion, on which the ministers and local preachers, took the Lord's Supper together, he says, "A few from the country came to my house to take refreshments before they went home, and the Lord gave us liberty in prayer. The power of God was present, and truly we had a blessed time."

In this spirit for upwards of forty years, this good man went about the towns and villages, of what are now the Dewsbury, Birstal, Cleckheaton, Morley, and Ossett Circuits; in the open air, in private houses, in schools and mission rooms and chapels of his own and other communions, preaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus, "and some believed the things which were spoken and some believed not."

"There went a man from home;
And to his neighbours twain
He gave, to keep for him
Two sacks of golden grain.
Deep in the cellar one
The precious grain concealed;
And forth the other went
And strewed it in his field.

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The man returns at last—
Asks of the first his sack;
'Here take it; 'tis the same;
Thou hast it safely back.'
Unharmed it shows without,
But when he would explore
His sack's recesses, corn
There finds he now no more:
One half of all therein
Proves rotten and decayed,
Upon the other half have
Worm and mildew preyed.
The putrid heap to him
In ire he doth return,
Then of the other asks,
'Where is my sack of corn?'
Who answered, 'Come with me,
And see how it has sped,'
And took, and shewed him field,
With waving harvests spread,
Then cheerfully the man
Laughed out and cried, 'This one
Had insight, to make up
For the other that had none;
The letter *he* observed,
But *thou* the precepts sense;
And thus to thee and me
Shall profit grow from hence;
In harvest thou shalt fill
Two sacks of corn for me,
The residue of right
Remains in full for thee.'"

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CHAPTER XVI.

AMONG THE SICK AND DYING.

We have now to contemplate Mr. Marsden in his work among the sick and dying. He took pleasure in this employment, from the beginning of his Christian course; but for eleven years from his retirement from business, down to the beginning of 1872, this was his daily work; excepting an interval of illness in 1866. He was ready to go to any one, but his visits were principally to the poor, the broken down, the profligate, the self-abandoned, and the desperate. Amongst these especially, he went about day by day, year after year, seeking, in order to save, the lost. Like our noble-hearted seamen at the life-boat stations around the coasts of our sea-girt isles, who encounter the perils of the tempest, for the rescue of the shipwrecked;—so James Marsden was always on the look

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out for those who were about to be swallowed up in the gulf which he saw yawning to receive them; and regardless of self, he launched forth in the life-boat of the Gospel for their rescue.

While concerned principally for the needs of the soul, he did not ignore those of the body. He relieved these out of his own purse to the extent of his ability, and supplemented his own gifts by begging of his affluent townsmen; some of whom, gladly and regularly, made him the almoner of their bounty.

The following pages contain the substance of some of the cases he has recorded, which with a few, necessary, verbal corrections and omissions, we give in his own words.

CASE I.—AN ABANDONED WIFE.

"I often spoke to A. B. about her soul, and told her I thought she could not live long, but she would not answer me, and got out of my company as soon as she could find a suitable retreat.

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"In a short time she was confined to her house, and though she often told me my visits were not welcome, I persevered.

"After a few weeks she began to yield, and one day, while I was at prayer, she was quite broken down, and began to cry bitterly. She then said 'There is no mercy for me. I have been the very worst character in the town, and I am sure to go to hell when I die. I have no hope, and it is useless to pray for me.'

"I read the Scriptures and other suitable books to her, but the parable of the Prodigal Son, and the account of the Thief on the Cross, seemed to give her a little hope.

"I persevered day after day until she began to pray for herself. I saw she was near her end and unsaved, and I tried to persuade her to expect salvation. I told her my experience, showing her it was by simple faith alone she could be saved, that she must not look at her sins, but at Jesus, and *believe in her heart* that He suffered

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death for her, and by His death made a full atonement for her sins.

"The next morning, when I got to the house she was a frightful sight. She was without cap, her hair was all loose, and she was screaming 'I shall be lost! I shall be lost! I shall be lost for ever!'

"The house was nearly full of women. There were more than twenty, and I spake boldly to them, and requested all who were not praying women to retire. I opened the door, and kindly, yet firmly, asked round, 'Are you a praying woman?' One by one they retired, leaving me with the woman and her attendant.

"I then called her by her name, and said, 'I know that Jesus died for you, and that He is willing to save you. I am quite sure He is. Expect salvation, and you shall not expect in vain. Look to the Saviour while I pray. Remember that passage, '*The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.*' 'ALL SIN,' however great.

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"After I had prayed a few minutes she exclaimed—'My sins are pardoned!' This she repeated over and over again, and continued praising God for several hours, and then died in peace."

CASE II.—ONCE A SUNDAY SCHOLAR.

"C. D., in her childhood, had attended the Church Sunday School, was frequently the subject of concern for her soul, and often prayed in secret places. But her parents were ungodly, and she had no friend to whom she could open her mind.

The minister of the Church she attended was a pious man, and she often wished to tell him of her concern, but her courage failed her, and she quenched the Spirit by going with other young women to places of amusement, and in this way, after her marriage, she and her husband were accustomed to spend the Lord's day, till her family kept her at home altogether.

"She took a cold from which she never recovered. Death was staring her in the face.

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She felt unsaved, and was alarmed. She read her New Testament; but having several small children, and only one room, she could not be composed in prayer. Her husband was steady, and kind; but when he was at work, she often had to rise from her bed to look after her children.

"One morning in the winter, her husband, on his way to work, called, and said to me, 'You must go and see my wife. She has never slept these two or three nights, and she does nothing but pray.'

"I told him I would go as soon as it was light, and went about eight o'clock, and found her very ill, and in great distress of mind.

"The children were all on the hearth before the fire, undressed, and playing and quarrelling as children do. A neighbour followed me into the house, and I said to her, 'Do take these children into your house. Take their clothes, and something for their breakfast. Do not let them in to disturb their mother any more.' She kissed

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her children, and the neighbour did as I requested.

"When they were gone, I read a part of the 10th Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. The 9th verse 'For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness,' &c.; I read over and over again. When I read the 13th verse, 'For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved,' she said, 'WHOSOEVER! that means *me*,' and she repeated it again and again.——I said, 'Now C., remember what I have often read to you, Ye shall find me when ye search for me with all your heart. Your whole heart must be engaged with God.' I read again those passages in Romans. She laid hold. I began to pray, and had power with God. In a few minutes she cried out, 'I have got it! I have got it! Glory! My sins are pardoned!' And she praised God as long as she had any strength. As I was leaving, she pressed my hand, saying, 'I shall die to-day, and go to heaven too. I am sure I shall.'

"In the afternoon I visited her again.

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She rejoiced greatly at seeing me, saying, 'I should have been lost if you had not come to see me' and to show me the way. After you were gone, I fell asleep, and slept four hours, as I had no sleep so long, for fear of being lost. When I had found peace I could sleep comfortably.' I encouraged her to hold fast her confidence, and prayed with her. She repeated, 'I shall die to-day, and go to heaven too. I know I shall.' She died that evening at eleven o'clock. Another soul saved 'by grace through faith.'"

CASE III.—A SON OF PRAYING PARENTS.

"E. F. had spent a fortune in drinking and other wicked habits. While in a state of intoxication he had fallen down stairs and crushed one of his legs. After swelling to a large size the skin burst, and the doctor told him it was likely to mortify and be the end of him.

"The clergyman of the parish went to see him, but could not gain admittance; and a town missionary was treated in the same

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way. One of his neighbours informed me of him, and said, 'If you cannot get permission to see him, no one else can.' I said I would try, after I had prayed about it.

"The day following I went with a firm assurance that I should see him. His wife met me, and I said,

"'Do you know me?'

"'Yes, everybody knows you,' said she.

"'Will you go up with me to see your husband?' said I.

"She replied, 'No, but you can go if you please.'

"When I got to his bedside, I said, 'Do you know me?'

"'Yes, very well,' said he, 'and I am very glad to see you,' and he took me by the hand and grasped it a long time, looking me in the face, and saying, 'Bless you,' while the tears trickled down his cheeks.

"I said, 'Do you feel that you are a great sinner?'

"'I am,' said he, 'There never was a more wicked character in every way.'

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"'Jesus died for the chief of sinners, and He died for you, and is willing to save you,' was my answer.

"'It is too late,' said he. 'There is no chance whatever. It is all over with me. I have given myself up for lost; yes, lost for ever! I dare not expect mercy. It is quite unreasonable for me to do so.'

"'Come, come, Mr. E.,' said I, 'you are out of hell yet. Don't give yourself up to despair. Had you not a praying father, Mr. E.?'

"'Yes, I believe I had.'

"'And had you not a praying mother?'

"He now burst into tears, and was sometime before he could speak. As soon as he recovered himself, he said,

"'I had a praying mother, the best any poor lad ever had, but I shortened her days by my wicked conduct, and that is the greatest weight on my mind.'

"I encouraged him to hope for mercy, and read to him the most suitable portions of the Word of God. I then said, 'God has not

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forgotten your mother's prayers for you, and I believe you will be saved. Try to lift up your heart to God while I pray.' Whilst I prayed he wept and sobbed like a true penitent. When I got up he grasped my hands, saying,

"'I never heard such a prayer since my poor mother died.'

"He lived about three weeks after my first visit. I saw him two or three times a week; and he began to have hope, and then confidence.

"The last time I visited him was on a Saturday. He was then quite sensible, and I asked him,

"'Have you found peace with God through believing in Jesus?'

"He said, 'I am not fully satisfied, but I have no fear of death, and I fully believe God will save me, wicked as I have been.'

"The next day he sent for one to whom he had used offensive language. When he came, the penitent put out his hand, and asked his forgiveness. 'I have nothing against you,'

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said he, 'and I am glad to see so great a change in you.' He read and prayed with him, and asked him if he had a good hope of heaven. He said he was afraid to say too much, as he had been such a great sinner; but he felt such peace as he never expected, and he believed he should get to heaven after all.

"He died the same evening, and I have no doubt of his salvation."

CASE IV.—PLUCKED FROM THE BURNING.

"E. F. had lost a respectable social position through intemperance, and was reduced to absolute dependance on the bounty of others. On my first visit I found him reading the newspaper, and he gave signs of his disapproval of my presence. He kept on his hat, and read the paper, while I read the Word of God, and would not answer any questions I proposed to him,

"At my fourth visit I said to him, 'If you die in this hardened state, hell fire will be your portion;' and I read to him the awful

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declarations of Scripture about 'the worm that never dies, and the fire that will never be quenched.' I also told him about the companions he would have to all eternity.

"This moved him, and he said, 'O Marsden, this is dreadful, don't read any more about that, I really cannot bear it.'

"I then turned to the brighter side, and showed him the willingness of God to save sinners such as he was, and when I knelt down to pray, he pulled off his hat.

"At my next visit, as soon as I entered the room, he took his hat off, laid down the paper, and listened to the reading of the Scriptures. When I prayed, he rose from his seat, and leaned on the chair, and when I rose from my knees, I saw the first tear of penitence.

"On my next call, after talking to him in the most encouraging manner, and reading the Scriptures, he knelt while I prayed; and began to repeat his audible and earnest Amen.

"I then tried to get him to pray a few

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words; but this was a struggle. 'I cannot pray, Marsden,' said he. I said, 'You must pray. Try Mr. E., try, if only a few words.' He then broke through; crying several times, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' and in this spirit he continued for some time.

"When I went again, I said, 'Now Mr. E., —Have you found this blessing, peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ?' He grasped my hand, and said, '*I have.*' 'When?' 'About four o'clock this morning, after much distress, which prevented me sleeping, I got upon my knees, and prayed, and groaned, and wept, till about six. Then it came to my mind, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." I rose from my knees rejoicing, but exhausted; and I got into bed and never slept more soundly in my life.'

"On all my subsequent visits, he repeated this glorious text, 'Being justified,' &c. For several months he was very helpless. He manifested the greatest gratitude for the kindness shown him by friends. When he

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was dying, one said to him, 'If you feel you are going to heaven, lift up your hand.' Immediately he lifted up both hands, and said, 'Yes! yes! yes!' and with a sweet smile on his countenance fell asleep in Jesus.

"Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire."

CASE V.—HOW CAN HE LOVE ME?

"G. H., on my first visit, said, 'Marsden, I believe I shall never get better in this world; do you think there is any chance of my being saved, for you know I have been one of the greatest sinners in Dewsbury, and I do not like the thought of going to hell?'

"I said, 'Why G., do you think there is a hell?'

"'Do I think there is a hell? There is that. I have had a peep into that dreadful place, and I could tell you of some of my old chums I saw there, and I am dreadfully afraid of going to them. My wife there knows who they are, and you knew them

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too. Some of them died drunk and swearing. I have had quite enough of their company. We were all a bad lot, and I am glad I am not with them.'

"I told him that the vilest sinners out of hell might be saved if they came to Jesus, with true, penitent hearts. I said, 'Jesus loves you, G.' He said, 'Nay, how can He love such a sinner as me?' I said, 'He loves you so well that He died for you.' He burst into tears, and said, 'How can that be?'

"I then explained to him in the plainest and simplest manner I could, how Jesus came into the world, and lived a life of toil, and then suffered death on the cross to make atonement for the sins of the whole world; and therefore he was included. I pointed him to various passages to prove the truth of what I said and prayed with him, and he seemed much encouraged.

"On my next visit I took him the first volume of 'Ashworth's Tracts;' and his good wife read them to him. He was greatly

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encouraged with the story of 'Old Niff and his dogs,' and when I called the next time, he said, 'I believe God will save me, for if He can save such old rips as Niff, I am sure He can save me.'

"I continued to visit him for about two months, and he continued to get more knowledge of the plan of salvation. His wife read the Scriptures to him every day, and other interesting books, which I lent him. One day when I called, his wife told me he had been praying all night, and then he said, 'I cannot live much longer, if God does not pardon my sins, for I get more miserable every day.'

"I encouraged him to expect salvation then; to behold Jesus dying for him, and to trust in him with all his heart, and assured him that if he would do so, God would save him whilst I was there. I had not prayed many minutes before he shouted,

"'God has pardoned my sins! I am sure He has! O, how happy I am!'

"And he shouted, 'Glory!' and I shouted,

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'Glory!' and his wife shouted, 'Glory!' and the neighbours came round the door.

"He lived some weeks in the enjoyment of peace with God, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost, and then died in the Lord. His wife died a year after her husband in the full assurance of hope."

CASE VI.—AWFUL CONSEQUENCES OF MARRYING WITH UNBELIEVERS.

"I had known I. J. for some years, as one of the most wicked, drinking, and profane swearers in Dewsbury. I was informed that the clergyman had been to see him, but the man stood at the top of the stairs, with a poker in his hand, swearing he would kill him if he came up. I said, I will go to see him, he will not kill me, nor turn me down stairs.

"When I got to the house, his attendant said, she was afraid he would do me some mischief if I went up, and she would ask him if I might go. I said, 'No, I will go up, if you will allow me; I am not afraid.'

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"When I entered the room, he was sitting at the fireside, wrapped in blankets. He looked at me and trembled, but he could not speak. I looked earnestly at him, and then taking him by the hand, I said, 'Poor ——, you are very bad. I am sorry to see you so ill. Have you much pain?' He tried to speak, but was greatly agitated. After talking about his body, and various other things, until he became composed, I began to talk about a large family Bible that was upon the drawers, covered with dust. I brought it on to the table, and that Bible introduced a most singular history of himself, which I will try to narrate in his own words, as near as possible. All the particulars were not obtained at one, but successive visits.

"'O Marsden,' said he, 'there is a sad tale hangs on that Bible, which I will tell you, if you will have a little patience.'

"I found I had got into his confidence, and after seeing that the door was shut at the bottom of the stairs, he began his story.

"'When a boy of thirteen or fourteen, I

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was bound an apprentice to ——. He was a good man, and I generally went with him to the chapel, and Sunday school, and got some education; but I was a wild, bad lad, and my master had a deal of trouble with me. When I was about eighteen, I began to get into bad company, and stayed out late at night. My master often reproved me, and told me he would not allow it, but I took no notice of him. When I was about nineteen, I thought I was very strong, and when my master told me he would not allow it any longer, and set me a time to come in, I took no heed, for I thought I was stronger than he. I had given up calling him master, and called him by his Christian name.'

"'One Monday, at dinner, after I had stayed out late on the Sunday night, he told me that if I was not in the house before ten, or a little after, that night, he must have a reckoning with me. I did not get in till near twelve. He was waiting up for me, and when we met, he said, I had gone my length, and he laid on me with a whip. I struck

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him with my fist, and gave him some severe blows. He then laid aside the whip, and we had a fair battle; but I soon found out he could fight better than I could, and having such long arms, he knocked me down as fast as I could rise, until I gave it up.'

"'My master then got the whip, and made me promise that I would be a good lad, while I was with him.' 'Thou hast called me ——, as though I was not thy master,' said he. I said, 'I will call you my master as long as I live, and I will go with you to the chapel again, and do anything that you want me to do.'

" 'We then washed ourselves; for we had both bled freely. I got my supper, and my master talked kindly to me, and after supper we knelt down, and he prayed with me.'

"'This was the turning point in my life. I broke off all my bad companions, and went regularly to chapel and prayer meetings; saved my money, got some good books, and joined ——'s class. In a few weeks I found peace with God at the class meeting; and

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went with others, to carry on prayer meetings in various country places. I also became a teacher in the Sunday school, and was very happy for three or four years, and was saving my money to furnish a house, and during this time, I took in that Bible!

"'But, I soon made a great mistake, which has proved the cause of the greatest misery a man can have in this world, and I shall be lost for ever in the next.'

"After some hesitation, he told me his great mistake. He said, 'There was a very handsome young woman, who came regularly to chapel, and I thought she would suit me for a wife.

"'I made some enquiry about her of the mistress with whom she was in service. She said she was a steady, clean, hard-working girl, but she had a bad temper.

"'I spoke to her, and she was very pleasant and agreeable, and promised she would never hinder me from going to chapel, or any other place that I thought proper. She also promised she would go with me,

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but did not wish to be a Methodist at present.

"'As she was so agreeable, and promised to take care of the house and make me comfortable, I really thought we should be happy. But I never asked my leader's advice, nor that of any of my religious companions, till it was too late.

"'When we had got all things ready for the marriage, I invited them to the wedding. They then told me I had made a wrong choice, but it was now too late, and this I found out to my sorrow.

"'For some time, she went regularly with me to the chapel, and made no objection to family prayer, and I still hoped she would go with me to the other means of grace; but in a few months, she wished me to go one Sabbath afternoon to see some friends, and to this, for the sake of peace, I consented. After our first child was born, she would never go to the chapel again, and began to desire me to give it up, and to go with her to places of amusement both on the Sabbath and week days.

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"'Failing to succeed, she began to persecute me, and to call me, and all Methodists ill names, especially those who did not walk consistently. After a while she began to go to bed at night, when I was at the meetings, putting out the fire also, and providing neither supper nor breakfast.

"'I bore it with patience for some time, and then she locked me out at nights, and I had to ramble where I could, for she would not open the door for me.

"'This was more than I could bear, and I made up my mind to punish her, and one night I broke open the door, and thrashed her right well.

"'We scarcely ever met at home after this, but we began to quarrel and fight. If I was quiet and wanted to be all right, she would set on me like a dog, and fight as long as she had any strength.

"'Having no comfort at home, I began to go to the public house, spending a great part of my wages there, and I became as wicked as the devil could make me. We lived together

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in this way for more than thirty years, and she died in this state.'

"At my first visit I asked him if I might read and pray with him. He said, 'You can please yourself Marsden, but it will be of no use to me, for I have no desire to be saved, and I could not pray on any account. I cannot utter a word even of the Lord's prayer.'

"One morning, —— came running to our house, saying he was dying, and no one durst go into the house. When I got into the chamber, he said, 'O, Marsden, I am glad you are come, for this room was full of devils, but as soon as you came to the top of the stairs they all vanished at once. His hair stood out with fright. He said, 'I wish you could stay with me as long as I live. I know I shall go to hell when I die, but really this is past bearing.

"I remained with him as long as I could, but —— came to my house again, saying, 'He was as bad as ever.' I went again, and when I got to his bed side he told me the

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same as before, and I stayed with him till he had ceased to notice any one.

He had taken no strong drinks for several weeks and, therefore, this dreadful excitement did not result from that cause.

CASE VII.—POOR BUT RICH.

"In March, 1864, I began to visit Sarah Farnish, at Earlsheaton. She had been a widow eighteen years, a Methodist sixty years, and was eighty-four years old. She had received a good education, had married a very worthy man, and they lived happily together. They had three daughters, all of whom died happy in God. She maintained herself by teaching a girls' school till she nearly lost her sight, when she was reduced to great poverty.

"Many times, when I visited her, I enquired if the cupboard was empty; and she often said, I have had no breakfast; but I knew my Father would send me a good dinner.

"One forenoon, when I called, I asked

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her if she had any food for the body. She said, 'This morning, while I lay in bed with no fire, no coals, and no food, I was tempted to think God had forsaken me, and that if I had been His child He would have provided better for me; but I cried, 'He is my God, and I am His child, and He will send me help.'

"Just then a neighbour came in, shouting, 'Sarah, have you no fire?' I said, 'No, but if you can afford to give me a few coals I will praise the Lord.' She brought me a basket of coals, and kindled my fire. Very soon another came in, and said, 'Sarah, have you had no breakfast?' I said, 'No, but if you can give me a cup of tea I will praise the Lord for it.' She brought me a cup of tea, and some nice toast. During the forenoon, a gentleman I never saw, sent me a cart load of coals, and another sent me eight pounds of flour.' I visited her for several months, and many such interpositions of providence did she relate to me.

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"As she drew nearer to her Father's house, her prospects grew brighter and brighter, and it was a privilege to visit her. She often told me she would welcome me to glory, and would be looking out for my arrival. At my last visit, she grasped my hand, and shouted, as her strength would permit, 'I am going home! going home! All is well! I shall soon be with my Jesus.'

"So died Sarah Farnish.

"O may I triumph so,
When all my warfare's past;
And dying, find my latest foe
Under my feet at last."

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CHAPTER XVII.

EVENING AND MORNING.

In the autumn of 1866, the Centenary Chapel was closed for alterations. The public services were conducted in the band room behind the chapel, and in the school room in Wellington Road.

On Sunday morning, October 21st, Mr. Marsden was preaching in the school room. His text was, 1 John iv. 18. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." While preaching he was struck with paralysis, and was carried helpless and speechless into the vestry. He was taken home in a cab, accompanied by his wife and the doctor. In about a month, he was so far recovered as to be able to use his pen, and wrote "I

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thought I was going to glory, and I was very happy and longed to be there."

In April, 1869, two and a half years later, he wrote, as from the land of Beulah, "I have been so far restored to health as to be able to visit the sick and poor, and to preach one sermon in the chapels near at hand, about every other Sabbath. But I am very feeble in body, not able to walk far at a time without resting; but I greatly rejoice that I am able to go to the means of grace, and to attend my class. I have seen many conversions on a sick bed in my visits, especially among the poor. I am happy in the work of my great Master, and in the means of grace, especially in closet prayer. My prospects for glory are as bright as ever. *I have never lost my sense of acceptance with God for more than fifty years! I have never been in Doubting Castle since God set my soul at liberty!!*"

In the month of May he visited Bury, and was the guest of the Rev. John Morris, who was formerly in the Dewsbury Circuit.

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From Bury, accompanied by Mrs. M., he sallied forth to Bolton, Haslingden, and Heywood, calling on relatives and friends.

In April, 1871, the last year of his active life, he was again the guest of Mr. Morris, at Oldham; from whom, and from his family, he received the kindest attention. "After dinner," he writes, "we called to see some of my old friends, one of whom, Mr. Joseph Ryley, is more than eighty years of age, and we had a happy meeting together. We also visited the daughter of my old class leader, Mr. John Mills, who called her servants in while I prayed with them.

"On Friday, accompanied by Miss Morris, I went to Bardsley, near Ashton, to see my eldest brother, Samuel; and we walked round the village till near twelve o'clock, and visited a poor sick woman.

"On Sunday afternoon I went to the Sabbath school, and addressed the scholars. Such a number of young men and women, from sixteen to twenty-two, I have not seen in any school for some years.

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"On Monday I went to see my old friend and companion, William Brearley, who is patiently waiting the coming of our Lord to gather him to his Father's house."

On his seventy-fourth birthday, October 5, 1871, he made his last entry, in which he says, "I have glorious manifestations of the divine presence in visiting the sick, and in seeing others converted to God, and dying in the faith. If I am spared I intend recording some other cases."

We come now to *the closing scenes.*

At the Annual Trustee Meeting in January, 1872, a plan was submitted for the erection of an additional chapel in Dewsbury. The proposal struck chords, and made music in James Marsden's soul. He had foregone the acquisition of wealth, and had laboured hard for the salvation of his neighbours, and for the prosperity of the Church. He could not give money, but knowing that the hearts of men are in the Lord's hand, he gave himself to prayer.

One morning in January, he was pouring

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out his soul in secret, for the blessing of God upon the enterprise. While in an agony of earnestness, he felt conscious of a diminution of physical energy. He tried to rise from his knees, but could not, for his left side was paralysed, from the shoulder to the foot.

His first seizure was in the desk, while preaching; the second in the closet, while praying!!

And now, after having for more than fifty years sought to do his Lord's will, he was called to suffer it, and for two years to exemplify in seclusion and affliction, the power and beauty of that grace, which had been so conspicuous in health.

During most of this period he was able to read, write, and converse; and, occasionally, on fine Sunday mornings, in the summer, he was wheeled in a hand carriage to the Centenary Chapel, where his presence was known even to those who could not see him, by the responses, with which, during prayer and sermon, the congregation had long been familiar.

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It was the writers privilege frequently to visit him. On these occasions he manifested lively interest in the work of God, and was full of solicitude for others. If his wife was absent he would knock for her and for the servant to come in to prayer, which we sometimes accompanied with singing. He often said, "we hear no complaining in our house; we have no grumblers here."

During a long portion of his illness, with a little assistance, he was able to get to the sofa, where he spent hours in writing letters, to some about the work of God and to others about their own salvation. One of his letters to the writer, was a request that he would visit a poor broken-down prodigal, in one of the slums with which he himself was so familiar, and where he was so well known.

The Rev. F. W. Macdonald visited Dewsbury as a member of the Missionary deputation. Mr. Marsden wrote and told him of his recollection of his grandfather, the Rev. James Macdonald, and of the help received

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through him when in the depths of penitential distress; and to the great delight of the aged saint, Mr. Macdonald, in company with the Rev. A. Freeman, called the next morning, and talked and prayed with him.

On the evening of Friday, February 4, 1874, a change took place which said,

"*The Master is come, and calleth for thee.*"

From this time, he spake with difficulty, but he was heard to soliloquize,

"THE VEIL IS REMOVED!
THE GLORY APPEARS!"

During the night, the silver cord was loosening and the golden bowl was breaking. At half-past seven the next morning, in the seventy-sixth year of his age, he exclaimed,

"THEY COME! THEY COME! JESUS!"

AND HE WAS WITH
THE SHINING ONES
ON THE OTHER SIDE.

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HARK a voice divides the sky,
Happy are the faithful dead!
In the Lord who sweetly die,
They from all their toils are freed.
Them the Spirit hath declared
Blest, unutterably blest:
Jesus is their great Reward,
Jesus is their endless Rest.

Follow'd by their works, they go
Where their Head hath gone before:
Reconciled by grace below,
Grace had open'd Mercy's door;
Justified through faith alone,
Here they knew their sins forgiven;
Here they laid their burden down,
Hallow'd, and made meet for heaven.

Who can now lament the lot
Of a saint in Christ deceased?
Let the world, who know us not,
Call us hopeless and unbless'd:
When from flesh the spirit freed,
Hastens homeward to return,
Mortals cry, "A man is dead!"
Angels sing, "A child is born!"

Born into the world above,
They our happy brother greet;
Bear him to the throne of love,
Place him at the Saviour's feet:

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Jesus smiles, and says, "Well done,
Good and faithful servant thou;
Enter, and receive thy crown,
Reign with me triumphant now."

Angels catch th' approving sound,
Bow, and bless the just award;
Hail the heir with glory crown'd,
Now rejoicing with his Lord:
Fuller joys ordain'd to know,
Waiting for the general doom,
When th' Archangel's trump shall blow,
"Rise, ye dead, to judgment come!"

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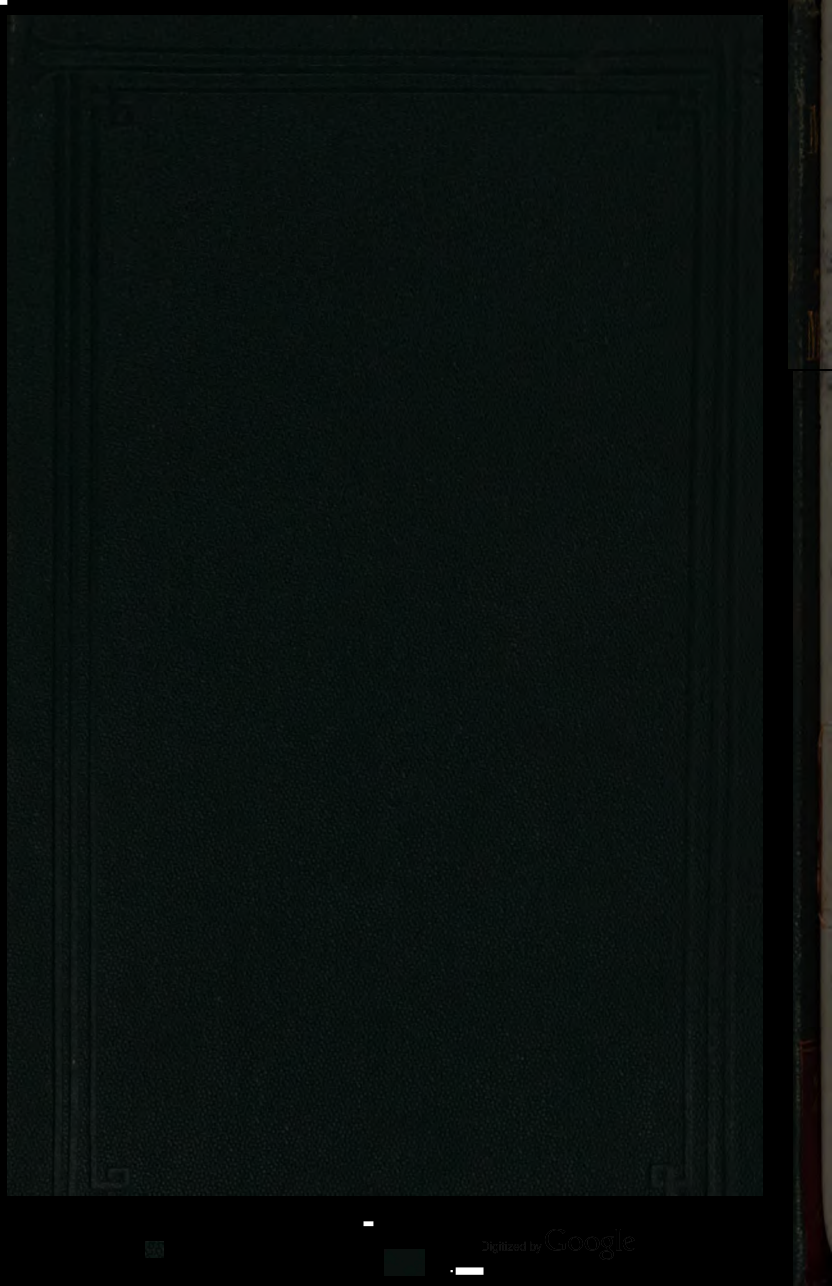
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